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And . . . to what, extent, in the South, was a cabinet-maker a regular part of any great establishment and what kind of service did he perform for his employers? Did he make much of the furniture for the mansion house, or was this mainly imported from abroad? There is much hearsay discussion of these points: but where are the documents in the case, and where the pieces whose origin they substantiate?

-Rachel C. Raymond, *Antiques*, 1922.

This project is dedicated to Katherine Hemple Prown, whose constant encouragement served as my inspiration and whose considerable editorial talents helped make my untamed prose presentable.

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Frontispiece. Detail of Map of the United States Exhibiting Post-Roads, the Situations, Connections, and Distances of the Post Offices, Stage Roads, Counties, Ports of Entry, Delivery for Foreign Vessels, and the Principal Rivers by Abraham Bradley, Jr., engraved by William Hamilton, Washington, D. C., 1796. 35 5/8" X 38" (inside present frame). MRF S-11,321. This map was mounted on linen in parts to permit folding for use as a travel map. The arrow indicates Petersburg.

A Cultural Analysis of Furniture-making in Petersburg, Virginia, 1760-1820

JONATHAN PROWN

Situated just below the falls of the Appomattox River and surrounded by fertile tobacco land, Petersburg, Virginia, emerged during the middle of the eighteenth century as an important cultural and economic center—a role that, to date, has been largely overlooked by historians and decorative arts scholars. Integral to Petersburg's early economy was a wide range of mercantile operations and trade shops, and surviving evidence strongly suggests that the town supported an extensive furniture-making community. The evolution of this community and its products between 1760 and 1820 was inextricably bound to larger cultural patterns and was directly affected by a variety of local, national, and international events. The result was a body of furniture and a trade legacy that can be added to the existing scholarship on furniture-making in the South.

After the middle of the seventeenth century, the site at the falls served as a small, narrowly-focused, tobacco trading center whose residents imported most of their household needs and luxury items from England and, to a lesser degree, from New England. By the early eighteenth century, such goods were also available through the nearby towns of Norfolk and Williamsburg. With Petersburg's formal establishment in 1748, however, rapid socioeconomic growth occurred, numerous trade shops opened, and local artisans began to provide the items that formerly had been only imported. By the time of the Revolution, the town's expanding furniture-making community was producing wares for clients throughout much of southern Virginia and northern North Carolina. As in other colonial Tidewater population centers, these early forms mirrored the British neat and plain fashion, and stood in sharp contrast to more ornate British rococo designs.¹

Because of its advantageous location, Petersburg steadily expanded its regional influence, offering a broad range of locally-made and imported goods in return for cash or, more often, for profitable cash crops like tobacco and wheat. After the war and into the early nineteenth century, local makers continued to fashion a wide range of furniture forms that echoed the earlier, decoratively restrained style. Windsor and fancy chairmaking, trades with important ties to Petersburg's substantial coachmaking industry, also were established. This period also saw the imposition of harsh British trade restrictions which, coupled with subsequent American protectionist legislation, had dire effects on eastern Virginia's economy. However, Petersburg's role as the commercial hub for an extensive network of inland counties sustained its economy and allowed its furniture artisans to survive and even prosper.

After 1800 Petersburg's furniture community continued to expand. Concurrently, however, large-scale manufactories emerged in northern cities, and before long, large quantities of furniture were being exported to southern markets. Petersburg's rapid economic and physical development, which initially allowed local furniture-making to flourish, encouraged the importation of northern products and contributed to the declining influence of its shops. After 1820 Petersburg's role as a regional furniture-making center was effectively over. Its economy became increasingly focused on the expansion of wholesale and retail operations and on the development of wheat, cotton, and tobacco industries. Hastening these changes was the catastrophic fire of 1815, which destroyed nearly two-thirds of the downtown area. The town's aggressive rebuilding focused on meeting the needs of large businesses rather than the traditionally structured trade shops. In other words, the very forces that promoted the remarkable growth of furniture-making in Petersburg between 1760 and 1820—a growing local and regional clientele, expanding trade networks, and substantial transportation improvements—eventually led to the trade's demise. As they had in the town's earliest years, its residents once again primarily relied on imported furniture.²

In many respects, this is a difficult story to follow, for as with most other Virginia colonial urban centers, Petersburg's economy and its furniture trades followed a decidedly inconsistent course

for the period in question. Aiding in the clarification of this somewhat erratic history, however, are three chronological periods, 1645-1780, 1780-1800, and 1800-1820, that emerge from the analysis of Petersburg's cultural and economic development. In this study, each period will be examined separately, beginning with a general historical overview followed by a detailed analysis of parallel furniture-making developments.



Figure 1. Detail of Map of Virginia and Maryland, London, 1751. HOA 30 1/2", WOA 48 1/8". Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (CWF), accession (acc.) 1951-233.

Although Petersburg was not formally established until 1748, settlement along the Appomattox River Valley began early in the seventeenth century, as eastern Virginia experienced extensive growth fueled by a burgeoning tobacco society whose voracious need for land necessitated continual westward expansion. A natural transition area for those moving inland lay at the falls of the great estuaries, the furthest point of tidal entry for large ships. Like Richmond on the James and Fredericksburg on the Rappahannock, Petersburg emerged just below the falls of the Appomattox (fig. 1). Settlement in the area increased considerably with the Virginia legislature's establishment of Fort Henry in 1645, a response to Oppechancanough's assault on English communities in the Tidewater area the previous year. Defended by forty-five men from Charles City,

James City, and Isle of Wight counties, the fort stood “for the defense of the inhabitants on the south side of James River and the prevention of the great relief and subsistence to the salvages by fishing in Bristoll alias Appomattocke River, as also for the cutting down their corn, or performing any other service upon them.”³

Fort Henry soon became a financial burden on the colony, yet it played an important role in Petersburg’s subsequent development. The structure was deactivated and granted, along with five hundred acres of land around the falls, to Abraham Wood, a prominent figure in the colony who had previously led numerous explorations across much of southern Virginia. Wood, and later his son-in-law Peter Jones (for whom the town may have been named), recognized the location’s advantageous position as a primary point of departure for inland exploration and trade ventures. Under their powerful influence, the site evolved into a regional economic center. The construction of permanent roads, ferries, and mills, all of which were carefully designed and promoted by wealthy local planters and traders who stood to receive from them the greatest benefits, stimulated inland population growth. In the 1730s the introduction of tobacco warehousing both legitimized and regulated the power of the area planter elite and ensured the subsequent rise of a strong staple crop economy, while the building of a permanent Anglican church, which functioned as a place where important ideological, cultural, political, and economic exchanges occurred, further strengthened development in the area.⁴

In 1738 an ordered arrangement of lots along the south side of the river below the falls was drawn up, a plan that reflected eastern Virginia’s reliance on traditional British geometric townscapes (fig. 2). By 1745 wealthy residents requested incorporation, a move that would legally empower them to propose and enact laws designed to secure further their control of the area economy. Three years later the town of Petersburg was formally established, while the village of Blandford was created directly to the east. In 1752 Wittontown, soon renamed Pocohantas, was established across the River. Because of their proximity, these three towns were socially and economically integrated, and colonial records that mentioned Petersburg frequently implied Blandford and Pocohantas as well.

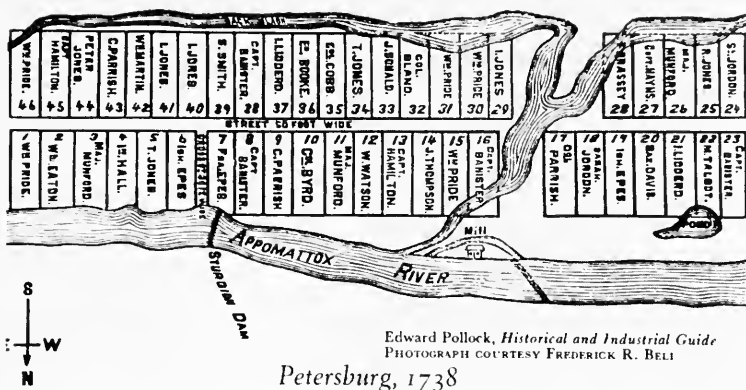


Figure 2. Town plan of Petersburg, 1738, from James G. Scott and Edward Wyatt IV, *Petersburg's Story* (Petersburg: Titmus Optical Co., 1960).

Formal establishment brought many commercial and physical improvements to the town. Building regulations were enacted, including a ban on wooden chimneys, which were a distinct fire hazard. Legislative acts and tax laws were aimed toward making the Appomattox a more efficient and productive navigational waterway, and after 1752 ferries were replaced by bridges, which allowed faster transportation of goods. Beginning in 1745, upriver residents successfully petitioned to clear the waterway to provide access for larger vessels and to control mill dams, fish hedges, trees, and other obstructions. Shortly after its establishment, Petersburg also solicited the legislature for funds to build a canal to bypass the falls above the town and terminate in a basin at the center of the commercial district; this project, however, was not begun until the 1790s.⁵

With these and similar regional improvements, the area south of the James River experienced a substantial population increase, which in turn necessitated the subdivision of existing counties and parishes. By the end of the Revolution, more than a dozen counties occupied the lands that in 1703 had all been within the boundaries of Prince George County. Pocohantas was made a part of Chesterfield County in 1749, and Petersburg was made a part of Dinwiddie County in 1752. Blandford

remained in Prince George County. The establishment of Amelia County in 1735, and its subsequent division to create Prince Edward County in 1754, reflected the growth of upriver rural areas which increasingly looked to Petersburg as their primary market center. In general, the profitable tobacco trade from these surrounding counties provided a stable economic base for the emerging town.⁶

Comments by early visitors and residents clearly document Petersburg's emergence as a major economic center. In 1762 a local observer noted that the town had "very greatly increased, and become a place of considerable trade."⁷ The remarks of Roger Atkinson, a merchant who emigrated to the area from England in 1750, offer further testimony to the town's considerable growth. He wrote to an English acquaintance, "I well know that when Tob'o is not to be got at these Warehouses it is not to be got anywhere else in Virg'a . . . There is more land & more good Land & more inhabitants (& these yearly increasing) on the South side of James River than there is in all Virg'a besides. There is more Tob'o in these warehouses than there is in all York or James River besides from head to foot." Atkinson also noted the similar profitability of Petersburg's "second staple," referring to the growing number of milling operations along the river used in the production of flour and wheat, a vital part of the town's subsequent economic development.⁸

Petersburg's viability as a regional marketplace was enhanced by additional transportation improvements. The establishment of a post office necessitated the building of new overland trade routes, which in turn facilitated the movement of commerce to and from rural communities. Movement of trade above the falls accelerated in the 1770s with the introduction of the James River bateau, a long, flat-bottomed craft well suited for travel along the shallow and often narrow Appomattox. Patterns of commerce on the lower portion of the river continued to involve the shipment of wares from national and international market centers. The Duc du La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt recalled that Bermuda Hundred, where the James meets the Appomattox, was "the spot where the custom house is established and where the larger vessels discharge their cargoe to lighters and send them to Richmond and Petersburg."⁹

The town's estuarial accessibility promoted the development of direct ties to some of the largest and wealthiest trading

houses in England and Scotland, and by 1775 Petersburg, with a total population of around 2,000 people, had evolved into a thriving commercial center characterized by an increasingly diversified economy.¹⁰ What began as a profitable stopping point for fur traders and explorers developed into a regional marketplace with international connections. Along with Virginia's other emerging fall-line towns, Petersburg became an important transition area where the crops of inland farms could be brought for processing and shipment directly to England, or sent by small ships and barges, to Norfolk, Petersburg's primary trading partner and whose economy relied on the upriver agricultural trade.¹¹



Figure 3. Battersea, Petersburg, c. 1770. This brick dwelling with mid-nineteenth-century stucco originally was owned by John Bannister. The tripartite windows in the wings, as well as the landfront and side porches were added during an 1824 renovation by John Fitzhugh May. It is now owned and is being restored by Petersburg Museums, City of Petersburg. Photograph by Hans Lorenz.

General Henry Lee, in later recollections, stated that at the time of the Revolution, Petersburg was "the great mart of that section of the state which lies south of Appomattox, and of the northern part of North Carolina. . . and, after the destruction of Norfolk [which was completely burned in 1776] ranked first among the commercial towns of the state."¹² Johann David Schoepf, a German who documented his travels through the

colonies, wrote that "Petersborough exports a great quantity of tobacco and other produce, supplied not only by the Virginia plantations round-about, but brought in from North Carolina." He also noted that the town consisted of at least three-hundred houses and that "new settlers . . . are continually coming in, tempted by the advantages of trade and shipping there."¹³ Indeed, John Collett's 1770 map of North Carolina clearly documents the town's economic ties to that colony. A number of major northward-running trade roads out of the Roanoke River Basin are marked specifically "To Petersburg." Thomas Anburey, a British officer, recorded in 1779 that "there is a large wooden bridge, at the town of Pocahunta, up to which sloops, schooners, and small vessels continuously sail."¹⁴ Evidence of the considerable wealth attained by Petersburg's tobacco elite appears in John Bannister's ambitious mansion, Battersea (fig. 3). In short, Petersburg had in place a wide range of social, economic, and physical improvements which made it possible for the town to serve as one of Virginia's major commercial centers.

It is not surprising, then, that by the 1760s a variety of specialized businesses serving the rapidly growing local and regional population were established in Petersburg. With its international connections, the town became a vital regional source for the distribution of products such as textiles, medicines, ceramics, and other hard-to-find items. Imported household and luxury wares also were available at Petersburg's growing number of retail "stores." For example, "Buchanan, Hunter, & Co.," which had headquarters in New York and Petersburg, offered a broad range of European imports including tea and small wooden tea chests, textiles and clothing, and an assortment of specialty metalwares such as scissors, shoe and knee buckles, dining utensils, thimbles, and knitting pins.¹⁵

The emergence of a strong trade community, which included blacksmithing, cabinetmaking, coachmaking, plastering, painting, and silver, tin, and goldsmithing accompanied these retail developments. Through the town's many retail and wholesale stores, Petersburg's artisans were able to purchase a wide variety of tools and materials. For example, by the 1760s tradespeople had access to paints, pigments, "Lacker" and "shining brown" varnishes, gold and silver leaf, and "Dyers woods" like logwood, redwood, and madder for making stains.



Figure 4. Turned armchair, Dinwiddie or Mecklenburg County, Virginia, c. 1750. Ash. HOA 39 1/2", HOA (at seat) 16 1/4", WOA 26 1/4". MESDA Research File (MRF) S-7179.

Merchant David Buchanan not only imported a diverse assortment of specialized tools for carpenters, coopers, blacksmiths, plasterers, brickmasons, and cabinetmakers, but also furniture hardware and nails.¹⁶

As with Petersburg's history in general, the study of its early trade shops and, specifically, furniture-making traditions has been hindered by substantial losses of records. Research by the staff at the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts has identified a number of "joiners" and "carpenters" in the area, builders of houses and other essential wooden wares. These woodworkers may well have produced rudimentary furniture forms like a group of armchairs (fig. 4) attributable to an artisan in Dinwiddie or Mecklenburg County. This group includes a similar slat-back armchair (MESDA Research File S-3606), thought to have a Southampton County history, with different turning on the spindles and arm supports. A more closely-related example, with no history, is in the collection of the Concord Antiquarian Museum.¹⁷



Figure 5. Dining table, Petersburg, c. 1760. Walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 28 3/4", WOA 66 1/4", DOA (open) 69 1/2", DOA (closed) 21". MRF S-7170. Unless otherwise noted, all furniture illustrated hereafter has been attributed to Petersburg.



Figure 6. Dining table, c. 1770. Walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 28 1/2", WOA (closed) 17 3/4", WOA (open) 49", DOA 48 1/2". Collection of Mr. William Goode Berille, photograph by Hans Lorenz.

After the 1760s Petersburg became large enough to support an increasingly specialized community of furniture-makers, who produced wares such as a turned-leg dining table (fig. 5) with pad feet that descended in the Gilliam family of Burnt Quarter in Dinwiddie County.¹⁸ There is also a straight-legged variation (fig. 6) on the same general design, as well as a walnut hanging cupboard (fig. 7) with a history in the Bolling family, who by the 1790s controlled a large percentage of the town's rental properties.¹⁹ However, before Petersburg's early furniture history can be examined, its relationship to established furniture-making traditions in eastern Virginia must be considered.



Figure 7. Hanging cupboard, c. 1765. Yellow pine. HOA 38 3/4", WOA 19 1/4", MRF S-6548.

Throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, most Virginians were of British ancestry, and documents reveal that those who could afford it primarily sought furniture in the British taste. Prior to the establishment of Williamsburg in 1699, there were few Virginia communities large enough to support full-time furniture-makers. While some Virginians commissioned local turners, joiners, and carpenters to construct furniture, most relied on the tobacco trade networks with

Britain for fashionable wares, an option available mostly to the affluent planters that controlled Virginia's society. While Virginia's considerable importation of British goods continued into the eighteenth century, the newly created cities of Williamsburg and Norfolk began to serve as important furniture-making centers. By the middle of the eighteenth century, cabinetwares based on British urban designs and styled to meet the demands of Virginia's gentry were available from Williamsburg furniture-makers. A similar level of cabinetmaking activity developed in Norfolk, the colony's only major coastal port.²⁰ In 1775 Norfolk's population was more than three times that of Williamsburg and, despite the town's complete destruction by fire during the Revolution, surviving documents and objects indicate that a broad range of sophisticated cabinetwares were available both for local use and, importantly, for export throughout southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina.

By the time of the war, Williamsburg and Norfolk supported roughly the same number of artisans, with the capital's smaller permanent population offset by its status as the political and social center of the colony. During political seasons a transient population of wealthy planters and politicians purchased Williamsburg cabinetwares and carried them to other parts of Virginia. By contrast, Norfolk, like Charleston, South Carolina, served as a major international port for much of the coastal South and as the main trade intermediary for the growing upriver towns of Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Petersburg. These trade connections almost certainly disseminated Norfolk's cabinetwares across eastern Virginia, especially to those places directly accessible by major estuaries.²¹

Importantly, the common denominator for most of the furniture made in these early towns was its overwhelming reliance on British traditions. Virginia's commitment to the trade of valuable staple crops with Great Britain kept colonial residents constantly apprised of the latest fashions from London, Bristol, Liverpool, Glasgow, Dublin, and other important British style centers. Even though many of the mid-eighteenth-century colonists were fourth or fifth generation Virginians, deeply rooted cultural and economic ties to the mother country continued to shape almost every aspect of their lives.

Virginia furniture was influenced by British traditions in several ways. First, a number of British furniture-makers, who either recognized the profitability of catering to the colony's wealthy tobacco aristocracy or simply could not find work at home, moved to Virginia and brought with them their native methods of design and construction. Advertisements placed by artisans such as Benjamin Bucktrout of Williamsburg, Parker Hawkins of Norfolk, or James McCormick, who ended his varied career in Petersburg, emphasized their British training.



Figure 8. Pembroke table, c. 1775. Mahogany with yellow pine secondary. HOA 26 3/4", WOA 22 3/4", DOA (open) 30 3/4", DOA (closed): 20 1/4". MRF S-12, I-16.

Importantly, these immigrant cabinetmakers passed their traditional trade practices onto numerous journeymen and apprentices. British fashions also arrived in Virginia via that colony's importation of furniture, which influenced area tastes and provided design prototypes for artisans. This was certainly the case in Petersburg where, for example, a group of Pembroke tables with distinctive guttae feet (fig. 8) mirrored a common British form (fig. 9).



Figure 9. Pembroke table, England, c. 1760. Mahogany with oak and deal secondary. HOA 26 1/8", WOA 30 1/8", DOA (open) 34 1/2", DOA (closed) 18 1/8". CWF acc. 1990-91, photograph by Hans Lorenz.

The table in figure 8, purchased in Petersburg, is virtually identical to another (MRF S-7133) that descended in the family of Thomas Shore, who lived just across the Appomattox at Violet Bank in Chesterfield County. The stylistic and aesthetic alignment of these decidedly neat and plain productions, originally attributed to Williamsburg, with other local forms further suggests their Petersburg origin.²² Among their distinctive structural features are a pair of serpentine-shaped gates under either leaf and the use of finger joints on these gates which extend through yellow pine inner rails. The leaves have finger holds that are carved over much of their outer edges, a feature not commonly used on Williamsburg forms. A related neat and plain guttae-foot table (fig. 10) has also been attributed to Williamsburg,



Figure 10. Pembroke table, possibly Petersburg, c. 1770. Mahogany with oak and yellow pine secondary. HOA 28 1/2", WOA (open) 34 1/4", WOA (closed) 19 1/2", DOA 26 1/2". Collection of Dr. Janet R. Kimbrough, photograph by Delmore Wenzel.

but it may well have been made in Petersburg.²³ Not only is its overall design more closely aligned with the two previous Petersburg examples than with any known Williamsburg examples, but it was originally owned by St. George Tucker, who, between 1778 and 1788, lived at Matoax in Chesterfield County, directly across the Appomattox from Petersburg.²⁴ Yet another example that strengthens the Petersburg provenance for these guttae-foot tables is one that descended in Nottoway County, just below Petersburg.²⁵ Additional evidence that the guttae-foot was not the sole domain of Williamsburg artisans are a series of North Carolina examples.²⁶



Figure 11. Side chair, c. 1770. Walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 37", WOA 19", DOA 16 1/2". CWF acc. 1933-10, photograph by Hans Lorenz.



Figure 12. Side chair, England, c. 1760. Walnut. HOA 38 1/2", WOA 21", DOA 17 1/4". CWF 1983-124, 1, photograph by Hans Lorenz.

A Petersburg side chair (fig. 11) built for John Randolph of Roanoke reveals the same stylistic influence (fig. 12) as the aforementioned tables. Both in design and structure—specifically the leg profiles, the pinned joinery, and the stretcher arrangements—this chair mirrors numerous other examples with strong local histories. The chairs in figures 33-36, as well as a number of examples in private collections in the Petersburg area, are probably from the same shop.

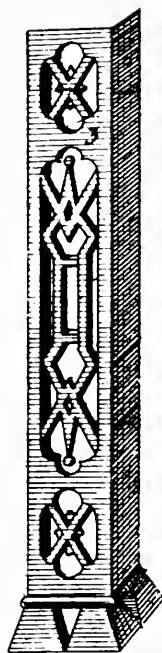


Figure 13. *Guttae foot design from Chippendale's Director, 3rd. edition, plate 133. Photograph by Hans Lorenz.*

Another important means of transporting British styles to the Tidewater area were cabinetmaking design books, notably Thomas Chippendale's *Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director*, first published in London in 1754.²⁷ "Chippendales Designs" appeared in the 1776 estate inventory of Williamsburg cabinetmaker Edmund Dickenson. Alexander Taylor, who began his cabinetmaking career in Petersburg just after the Revolution, also owned Chippendale's book. Interestingly, after Taylor's death in 1805, that volume appears to have been inherited by his son and business partner, Alexander Taylor, Jr. When the younger Taylor died in 1820, the volume was offered for public sale, and although nearly seventy years old, it was described as "one hundred and sixty copper-plate designs of the most elegant designs of household furniture."²⁸ Not surprisingly, a number of early Petersburg furniture forms display features like the guttae foot (fig. 13) illustrated in the *Director*.



Figure 14. Clothespress, by John Selden, Norfolk, 1775. Mabogany with yellow pine and mabogany secondary. HOA 74 1/4", WOA 50 1/8", DOA 23 3/4". Collection of Mr. and Mrs. C. Hill Carter, Jr., on loan to Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (L1976-121), photograph by Delmore Wenzel. This press is inscribed "J. S." and "1775."



Chippendale 1754-55

See 'according to the old of the cabinet', 15

1754-55

Figure 15. Clothespress design from *Chippendale's Director*, 3rd. ed., plate 102. Photograph by Hanz Lorenz.

How did Petersburg's emerging furniture-making community fit into this larger picture of the trade in eastern Virginia? Furthermore, what role, if any, did the town assume as a regional production center? The first documented cabinet-maker in the Petersburg area was Thomas Arbuthnot (see Appendix A for a biography of Arbuthnot as well as biographies of all other known Petersburg area furniture-makers) of Blandford who advertised in Williamsburg's *Virginia Gazette* in 1766 for "ONE or two journeymen CABINETMAKERS, who are sober and industrious, and understand their business well."²⁹ Arbuthnot first appeared in the Bristol Parish records one year earlier when he provided several inexpensive coffins for parishioners. Little else is known of his career, although after moving to Hanover in 1775, he placed an advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* confidently assuring residents that they "may be supplied with all Sort of Cabinet Work."³⁰ If Arbuthnot was able to employ several journeymen and apprentices, then he ran an operation not too different in size from the well-established shops in other Virginia towns. Another early Petersburg cabinetmaker was William Stainback, whose career lasted for almost fifty years. In

1772 he offered encouragement for “one or two CABINET and CHAIR MAKERS” to apply for employment and added that he would pay them weekly.³¹ These early cabinetmaking advertisements, along with the town’s vital trade ties to other parts of the colony, strongly suggest that Petersburg’s emerging furniture community may have been directly influenced by other Virginia cabinetmaking centers, especially by Norfolk and Williamsburg, and in fact a number of revealing connections can be cited.

The earliest known Norfolk furniture-maker to relocate to the Petersburg area was John Selden. A native of nearby Hampton, he trained and worked in Norfolk for nearly twenty years before losing his cabinet shop in January 1776 in the catastrophic series of fires that consumed the entire city. Six months later, Selden relocated to Blandford, where he announced his intent to carry on the “CABINET-MAKING business, as formerly, in all its branches.”³² Selden’s reputation is perhaps indicated by a commission to help refurnish the Governor’s Palace in Williamsburg after Lord Dunmore fled the colony in 1775 and his personal effects were sold.³³ Documented examples of Selden’s work include a signed clothespress (fig. 14) dated 1775 that was made for the Carter family of Shirley Plantation in Charles City County. Mirroring a design (fig. 15) in Chippendale’s *Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker’s Director*, it typifies his British-influenced style. Selden, who died just a year after he arrived in Petersburg, undoubtedly brought Norfolk trade traditions with him. His furniture-making legacy continued with the arrival of John McCloud, one of his Norfolk apprentices, who established a shop in Blandford after the War. In fact, artisans trained in Norfolk traditions steadily established shops in Petersburg well into the early nineteenth century.³⁴ With such strong trade connections and direct cabinetmaking links, Norfolk’s influence on Petersburg’s emerging furniture-making community was considerable.

For several reasons the specific contributions of Williamsburg’s artisans are more difficult to trace, and by way of explanation, it is necessary to reconsider that town’s role in providing furniture wares to other parts of Virginia. It is well documented that Williamsburg’s British-influenced cabinetwares were purchased by Jefferson, Washington, and other affluent Virginians who frequented the capital and who were united by their participation in the legal and political affairs of the colony.

For these wealthy and well-travelled patrons, Williamsburg may well have served as the main source for fashionable furniture. However, the contention that the town served as the *primary* cabinetmaking center in colonial Virginia remains problematic.³⁵ Williamsburg's clientele represented only a small minority of Virginia's colonial furniture-buying population. Many Virginians—urban and rural, rich and poor—purchased their furniture from shops located throughout the colony. Products from these shops reveal that Virginia's other furniture-making centers contributed considerably to its furniture traditions.

The steady arrival of immigrant artisans to Virginia throughout the eighteenth century, in addition to the rapid settlement of inland regions, surely resulted in the movement of British furniture-making traditions well beyond Williamsburg. For example, it is quite likely that many British-born artisans first arrived in Norfolk, Virginia's main international port. While some stayed in that city, others probably moved inland, and most brought with them the same British methods of construction and design that served as the foundations for Williamsburg's furniture-making community. In short, the common denominator for most pre-Revolutionary cabinetwares made in eastern Virginia lay not in their stylistic and structural dependence on Williamsburg prototypes, but rather in their deeply-rooted cultural allegiance to British traditions.³⁶

Other evidence further supports the conclusion that Williamsburg's direct influence on furniture-making in Petersburg was limited. Revealingly, no records of Williamsburg furniture-makers relocating to Petersburg exist. Moreover, while numerous other Virginia towns continued to expand after the middle of the eighteenth century, the capital experienced minimal population growth and remained, above all, a political and cultural center. Its relative lack of commercial trade activity was due primarily to its inland location on Virginia's Lower Peninsula, which offered reduced accessibility to the James and York rivers. In other words, Williamsburg was not a port town, and its movement of commerce to and from the inland centers was restricted. In 1783, by which time the capital had been moved to Richmond and Williamsburg's furniture-making activity was drastically curtailed, Johann David Schoepf wrote of the town, "the trade of this place was never great, its distance from navigable waters not being favorable to more active affairs

which thus became established in smaller towns.”³⁷ These sentiments were reiterated by St. George Tucker, a longtime resident and supporter of the town, who wrote in 1778 “there never was much trade in Williamsburg, probably little more than at present.”³⁸ The capital’s location beyond the reach of eastern Virginia’s extensive tobacco trading network appears to have resulted in its minimal impact on Petersburg’s emerging furniture traditions.

While Williamsburg’s furniture-making community may not have played a major role in shaping Petersburg’s furniture trades, one particular British-influenced neat and plain form, specifically a desk design (fig. 16) that is characterized by its distinctively stepped pigeon-hole configuration, may have made its way westward from the capital.³⁹ In its use of straight-bracket feet with quarter-round base moldings and composite foot blocking, this piece reflects common British practices. A similarly-styled walnut clothespress at Colonial Williamsburg (accession 1991-107) displays evidence of composite foot blocking and may well be part of the same group, although its drawer construction is identical to that of the desk in figure 20 that is attributed to Petersburg. The press’s drawered lower case has a walnut top, suggesting that it may have originally been made as a chest of drawers. While the press section may not be original, it appears to be an early addition.

Whether via an imported example or a transient artisan, this design made its way to Petersburg, circa 1770, and remained popular into the early nineteenth century. The desks, desk-and-bookcases, chests of drawers, and clothespresses attributed to this Petersburg group are united not only by their strong local and regional histories, but also by their shared structural and aesthetic features, including the vertically-laminated foot blocking, near full-depth dustboards, and, on many of the examples, deeply chamfered panels (five to twelve inches) on the bottoms of drawers. Other features commonly associated with Petersburg furniture-making are the scratch-beaded drawers with full-length mitered glue strips on the undersides and quarter-round base moldings—British-influenced approaches found on a broad range of southern furniture forms.



Figure 16. Desk-and-bookcase, Williamsburg, c. 1760. Walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 88", WOA 37 1/2", DOA 22 1/4". CWF acc. 1950-3-49, photograph by Delmore Wenzel.



Figure 17. Desk, c. 1765. Walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 41 1/4", WOA 38", DOA 20 3/4". Virginia Historical Society, acc. 964.37. Photograph by the author.



Figure 17a. Detail of desk in fig. 17, showing its interior.

The earliest Petersburg example appears to be a walnut desk (fig. 17), which descended in the Peter Jones family of Petersburg and Amelia County, with the same general interior arrangement (fig. 17a) as the Williamsburg desk-and-bookcase. Like all of the subsequent Petersburg examples, the Jones desk differs from the Williamsburg group in its use of vertically-laminated foot blocking (fig. 18), an idiosyncratic approach not commonly found on other early American case furniture. Other



Figure 18. Detail of desk in fig. 19, showing laminated foot technique.

desks by this maker, including one (fig. 19) that came down in the Gilliam family of Amelia County and similar forms by a number of eastern Virginia and North Carolina artisans, employed a more common British interior arrangement.¹⁰ Structurally and aesthetically related, and in fact probably from the same Petersburg shop, are several desk-and-bookcases, including a mahogany example (figs. 20 and 20a) from the Grigg family of Dinwiddie County, which is identical to one owned locally (MRF S-7168) that descended in the Gilliam family of the same county. Interestingly, one of the desks in this group is marked "1801" on an interior drawer, indicating the longtime popularity of the design. The form was updated only in its use of neoclassical hardware (fig. 21). Because of this documented example, the date of production for many of these neat and plain objects, even those with rococo hardware, could approach 1800.



Figure 19. Desk, 1770-90. Mabogany with yellow pine secondary. HOA 42 5/8", WOA 41 1/2", DOA 21 1/4". CWF acc. 1987-14, photograph by Hans Lorenz. The laminated foot of this desk is shown in figure 18.

The same shop appears to have produced a number of decoratively restrained chests of drawers, forms that not only speak strongly of Petersburg's interest in neat and plain fashions, but whose histories suggest the town's growing role as a regional furniture production center. One of these chests (fig. 22), which are characterized by their complex blind-mitered dovetail joints where the sides meet the top, descended in the Michel family of Mecklenburg County, a region connected to Petersburg by a major tobacco trade route.⁴¹ Another chest (MRF S-3019) that appears to be a part of this group originally belonged to a family in Orange County, North Carolina, at that time a rural area just across the border that also looked to Petersburg as its primary marketplace. This chest has replaced feet and base moldings, but its case construction and design



Figure 20. Desk-and-bookcase, 1770-90. Mabogany with yellow pine secondary. HOA 83 3/4". WOA 39 7/8", DOA 23 1/8". CWF acc. 1991-133, photograph by Hans Lorenz. An inscription on one of the interior drawers reads "J. B. Grigg . . . Dinwiddie . . . November 2, 1838."



Figure 20a. Open view of desk-and-bookcase in fig. 20.



Figure 21. Hardware from a Petersburg desk, 1801. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. James C. Wheat. Photograph by the author. The desk is walnut with yellow pine and virtually identical that in fig. 19 except for the hardware. It is marked "1801" on one of the interior drawers.



Figure 22. Chest of drawers, 1770-90. Mahogany with yellow pine secondary. HOA 36 1/4", WOA 42 1/4", DOA 20 1/2". CWF acc. 1967-99, photograph by Hans Lorenz.



Figure 23. Clothespress, 1770-90. Mahogany with yellow pine secondary. HOA 69 1/2", WOA 47 1/2", DOA 23". MRF S-6525.

mirror the Petersburg examples. Structurally and stylistically related to the previous pieces is a walnut clothespress (fig. 23) that was found in Petersburg in the early twentieth century. It utilizes rule-jointed doors (fig. 23a), a method commonly used on drop-leaf tables, yet found on several other area presses (see fig. 73).



Figure 23a. Detail of clothespress in fig. 23, showing rule-joint. Rule-joints are more common on drop-leaf tables, but they have been found on several Petersburg presses (see also fig. 73).

Petersburg's colonial furniture-makers produced other case pieces as well, including a desk (fig. 24) that came down in the Blanton family of Cumberland County, one of Petersburg's more active upriver agricultural suppliers. Its sophisticated construction and design—including distinctively shaped ogee-bracket feet, fluted quarter-columns and document drawer facades—clearly place it in the general school of British-influenced, neat and plain furniture common to urban Tidewater cabinetmaking centers. Other features shared by this group are the distinctive, ovolo-shaped sides on the document drawers and the grooved, unblocked attachment of the drawer bottoms. Undoubtedly by the same maker are an identical desk,



Figure 24. Desk, c. 1770. Walnut with poplar and yellow pine secondary. HOA 43", WOA 41 1/4", DOA 22". MRF S-7242.

now at Colonial Williamsburg (acc. 1980-80), and a chest of drawers (fig. 25), both of which were originally owned by members of the Elliott family of Prince Edward County, another important upriver trading region. The chest has triple-fluted columns like the desks, with smaller capitals and bases. Yet another example (fig. 26) is likewise made of walnut with yellow pine interiors and has a well-documented Petersburg history. Interestingly, to the desk has been added a bookcase section that appears to reflect a different Petersburg shop tradition. Like the Williamsburg desk, the flutes of its document drawers (fig. 27) are decorated with a carved herringbone pattern that appears to have been created with a rounded



Figure 25. Chest of drawers, c. 1770. Walnut with poplar and yellow pine secondary. HOA 43 1/2", WOA 38 1/4", DOA 22". MRF S-9066, acc. 3054.



Figure 26. Desk-and-bookcase, c. 1770. Walnut with yellow pine and poplar secondary. HOA 95", WOA 45", DOA 22 7/8". MRF S-3591.

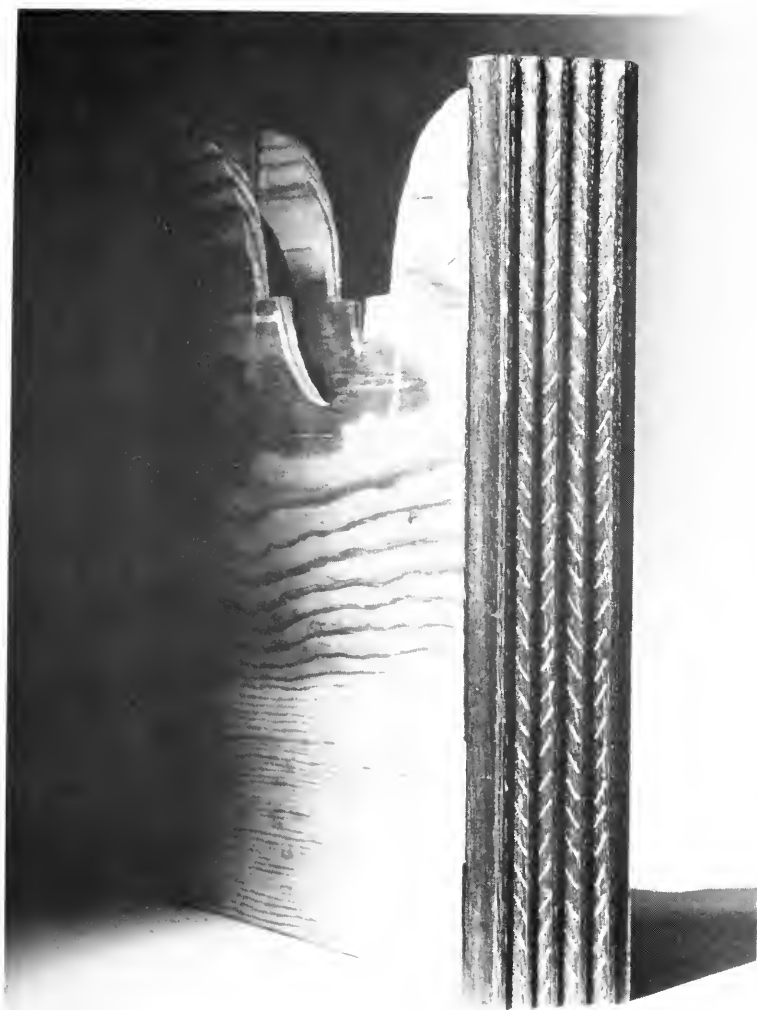


Figure 27. Detail of a document drawer showing berringbone carring from a desk in the Williamsburg collection (acc. 1980-80). Photograph by Hans Lorenz.



Figure 28. Corner cupboard, c. 1775. Walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 79", WOA 45", MRF S-7469.



Figure 29. Corner cupboard, c. 1770. Yellow pine. HOA 85", WOA 40 1/4". MRF S-3590.

veining tool. Ornamented with a fretwork frieze, a popular British motif and architecturally inspired, the bookcase is stylistically related to a walnut corner cupboard (fig. 28) and a yellow pine corner cupboard (fig. 29), both of which were found locally.¹²

That such fretwork was commonly used on architectural elements in Petersburg is evidenced both at Battersea and at Strawberry Hill, built in the late 1780s by the Haxall family. The



Figure 30. Door surround, Strawberry Hill, Petersburg, 1785-90. Photograph by the author.



Figure 31. Parlor fireplace and mantel, Strawberry Hill, Petersburg, 1785-90. Photograph by the author.



Figure 32. Desk-and-bookcase, possibly Petersburg, 1770-1785. Primary wood not recorded, yellow pine with oak interior drawer frames. Desk: HOA 42 1/2", WOA 43 1/2", DOA 22". Bookcase: HOA 59 1/4", WOA 43 7/8", DOA 14 3/4". MRF S-11,071.

latter displays a door surround on the main entrance, thought to have been added shortly after 1800, that is adorned with a similar guilloche pattern (fig. 30). Interestingly, the interior woodwork around the parlor fireplace (fig. 31) closely re-

sembles that found on a desk-and-bookcase (fig. 32), which descended in the family of Peter Stainback of Prince George County, who was almost certainly a relative of cabinetmaker William Stainback. In addition to sharing the same pitch pediment, both forms feature the prominent use of fluted pilasters and centrally-located fluted plinths.⁴³

The work of early Petersburg chairmakers is also well documented by surviving examples. Reflecting the same shop tradition as the Randolph family chair (see fig. 11) are a number of examples that display Petersburg's distinctive use of British-styled voluted ears and, at times, the use of stretchers on the front and sides of the frame, but not on the back. By the same maker is a walnut side chair (fig. 33) that descended in the Barnes family of Amelia County. Interestingly, this example has a rear stretcher. Also directly related are a set of meticulously-executed side chairs (fig. 34) made for the Eppes family of Appomattox Manor.⁴⁴ Other than their carved ears, and an unusual arched joint between the crest rail and the splat, these chairs are relatively unadorned. Like many other colonial Petersburg chairs, they utilize plain quarter-round moldings on the legs and seat rails, and unmolded shoes.⁴⁵

Another side chair (fig. 35) reflecting the same shop tradition descended in the family of William R. Davie, an influential planter and politician in Halifax County, North Carolina, which like other nearby areas looked to Petersburg as a main market center.⁴⁶ It is part of a mixed set of eight chairs, all of the same general design. While some display the distinctive stretcher arrangement, others use the more common box stretcher plan. Directly related is an armchair (fig. 36) with carved rosettes (fig. 36a) on the arm terminals, one of the rare carved examples of colonial Petersburg furniture. An interesting variation (MRF S-3836) on this splat design appears to have been made in a Portsmouth, Virginia, shop and is characterized by more pointed ears and small nodules on the crest and above the figure-eight in the splat.⁴⁷

Probably representing a less expensive version of the voluted crest rail design is a Petersburg side chair (fig. 37) with uncarved ears and a plain splat. It descended locally, as did another similar side chair (fig. 38). Although it lacks a rear stretcher, another pointed-ear side chair (fig. 39) is structurally and aesthetically related, and it too was owned in a Petersburg



Figure 33. Armchair, c. 1770. Walnut with yellow pine slipseat frame. HOA 30 5/8", HOA (at seat) 16 7/8", WOA 20 1/2", MRF S-7173.



Figure 34. Side chair, c. 1775. Cherry. HOA 36 5/8", WOA 21", DOA 17". Collection of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the Commonwealth of Virginia, photograph by Hans Lorenz.



Figure 35. Side chair, c. 1790. Mahogany with yellow pine slipseat frame. HOA 36 7/8", WOA 20 1/2", DOA 17 5/8". CWF acc. 1990-202, photograph by Hans Lorenz.



Figure 36. Armchair, c. 1780. Walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 37 7/8", HOA (at seat) 16 7/8", WOA 20 1/2". MRF S-7473.



Figure 36a. Detail of chair in fig. 36, showing carving on arm terminal.



Figure 37. Side chair, c. 1775. Walnut. HOA 37 1/4", HOA (at seat) 17 1/8", WOA 21". MRF S-6167.



Figure 38. Side chair, c. 1775. Walnut. Dimensions not recorded. MRF Smith 19-35.



Figure 39. Side chair, c. 1775. Walnut with walnut slipseat frame. HOA 37 1/4", HOA (at seat) 16 1/2", WOA 19". MRF S-7136.



Figure 40. Side chair, c. 1775. Walnut with yellow pine slipseat frame. HOA 37 1/4", HOA (at seat) 17", DOA 17". CWF acc. 1982-119, 1, photograph by Haus Lorenz.

family. A variation (fig. 40) of this design may well represent a different local shop tradition. With a history of ownership in the Eggleston-Booker families of Amelia County, this set of five chairs reveals more ambitious moldings on the shoes, legs, and seat rails. Although its splat is pierced, another chair at Colonial Williamsburg (acc. 1933-12) displays numerous similarities, including the molding placement and the stretcher arrangements. It was acquired from a Petersburg dealer.



Figure 41. Corner chair, c. 1775. Walnut with yellow pine secondary and poplar slipseat frame. HOA 32 1/2", HOA (at seat) 17", WOA (at seat rail) 17 5/8". Private collection, photograph by Hans Lorenz. Also recorded by MESDA as S-6591.

Also attributable to Petersburg are a series of decoratively restrained corner or “smoking” chairs, among them an example (fig. 41) originally owned at Flowerdew Hundred in Prince George County. These examples are characterized by their straight-tapered columnar arm supports, splats tenoned directly into the rear rail, and, on most of them, an unusual dovetail joint between the crest rail and the arms (fig. 41a).



Figure 41a. Detail of corner chair in fig. 41, showing crest rail joint.

Possibly from the same shop is a child's chair (fig. 42), a form that may well have originally stood on a small table or frame to raise it into a high chair. Its notable features include the arched joint at the top of the splat, like that in figure 34, and the serpentine arms with rounded terminals, mirroring those in figure 33. A corner chair (MRF S-7131) related to that in figure 41 descend in the Gilliam family of Petersburg and utilizes a more common lap joint for the arms. Another (MRF S-11,088) dovetail example belonged to a Brunswick County family, an area for which Petersburg served as the market center. A variation of the latter, with a pierced, inverted baluster-shaped splat remains in its original Charles City County family along the James River, just below where it meets the Appomattox.⁴⁸ A chair (S-3959) that descended in Powhatan County and probably was made there reflects a similar chairmaking tradition. It displays a larger version of the dovetailed arm joint and has splats that are tenoned into the rails, yet it also has balustrate columns and tapered legs.



Figure 42. Child's chair, circa 1780. Walnut with yellow pine slipseat and commode frame. HOA 21" (without castors), HOA (at seat) 13 1/2", WOA 11 1/8". MRF S-5110.

A walnut corner chair (figs. 43 and 43a), which, like the table in figure 10, descended in St. George Tucker's family, may also have been made in Petersburg. Originally attributed to Williamsburg, its widely-copied, British-influenced splat design appears on a wide variety of Virginia and North Carolina chairs (MRF Potter 30:14-15, S-12,038, S-6591), including one (fig. 44)



Figure 43. Corner chair, possibly Petersburg, c. 1775. Walnut with yellow pine secondary, HOA 30", WOA (at arms) 29 5/8", DOA 26". Private collection, photograph by Delmore Wenzel.

that is attributable to either Petersburg or the Roanoke River Basin.⁴⁹ The Tucker chair's splats run through the shoes and are mortised directly into rear rails. While this is seen on a set of Williamsburg chairs, the aforementioned Petersburg corner chair group is similarly executed, as are other Virginia and North Carolina examples (MRF S-3959, S-2534, S-4440).⁵⁰



Figure 43a. Detail of chair in fig. 43, showing its rail construction.

Surviving documentary evidence and furniture clearly indicate that by the time of the Revolution, Petersburg supported a thriving furniture-making community whose products were profoundly influenced by British traditions and by those of established furniture centers elsewhere in Virginia. Furthermore, ownership patterns of locally-made wares reveal that they were not only marketed for the townspeople's consumption, but also for the extensive surrounding population, a logical development in light of Petersburg's increasing role as a regional marketplace. Although hindered by the Revolution and its aftereffects, economic and otherwise, Petersburg continued to function in this role during the last decades of the eighteenth century.

Because of its economic importance to the colony, Petersburg, like Norfolk, was a prime target for the British during the Revolution. By 1781 enemy forces had gained control of Petersburg, and according to General Henry Lee, "everything valuable was destroyed, and the wealth of this town in a few hours disappeared."⁵¹ Most of the available evidence, however, suggests that this description is overstated. While large quantities of tobacco and a number of warehouses were burned, the town did not suffer the level of destruction experienced by Norfolk when it was completely burned in 1776. Even so, Petersburg's economic activity during and immediately after the war was



Figure 44. Side chair, Petersburg or Roanoke River Basin of North Carolina, c. 1775. Walnut. HOA 37 1/8", HOA (at seat): 16 3/4", WOA 19 3/4". MRF S-3058.

hampered by numerous obstacles, not the least of which was the immediate loss of trade with Norfolk. British officer Thomas Anburey explained in 1779:

The tobacco warehouses at Petersburg as well as at Richmond, are crowded with that commodity, as they cannot find purchasers. . . . some few merchants have ventured small sloops to the Bermuda Islands and have been successful, it is only these who have any commodities in their stores, the rest being shut up; and I cannot help making the same reflection, at seeing such towns as Petersburg and Richmond in the same state as that of Lancaster, all trade being at a stand in these places, where no doubt, before the war, it must have been very considerable, these two towns having formerly supplied the back settlers with all manner of stores for their plantations.⁵²

In response to the economic slowdown, residents and merchants of Petersburg, Blandford, and Pocohantas petitioned the legislature for incorporation as one town. In 1784, along with an area on the southwest side of Petersburg called Ravenscroft, they were united as the town of Petersburg, a move that helped centralize their economic resources and allowed the opportunity for area residents to become a more imposing political force within the colony.

After the war Tidewater urban centers were adversely affected by a variety of international diplomatic events. British interests retained control of many Atlantic ports and southern mercantile trading houses. In the 1780s British authorities imposed a series of harsh retaliatory trade restrictions which severely limited American coastal trading networks. Furthermore, the British decreed that all wares were only to be transported on their own vessels. Indeed, the situation was the same for many other American port towns. The economic effect on Petersburg was considerable, and the town's merchants, who formerly travelled to Norfolk to conduct trade, lost their most important supply source as that city's recovering economy came to a virtual halt. In response, Petersburg's political leaders initiated a petition to Congress declaring that their commerce had been ruined and that immediate relief was needed. They urged that immediate consideration be given to restoring Norfolk's shipbuilding industry and to opening the trade routes to Virginia-built and Virginia-owned ships.⁵³

Despite these setbacks, Petersburg survived far better than most southern commercial centers. The town's relative economic stability during this period resulted from its increasing economic self-sufficiency, and its emergence as an independent regional marketplace where artisans and merchants found a rapidly-growing clientele to serve. In essence Petersburg's inland-oriented agricultural economy created an effective economic buffer not available to the more singularly-focused shipping and trading economies of Norfolk and other American coastal cities. Population figures steadily increased, and physically the town grew. With the installation of a centralized agricultural marketplace in 1787, Petersburg greatly expanded its role as a primary commercial center for much of southern Virginia. Outside investment, another vital indicator of economic stability, also encouraged development. One such source for capital was Fredericksburg, where the economy was slow to evolve. Affluent residents frequently backed manufacturing enterprises in Petersburg and Richmond.⁵⁴

By 1790 Petersburg had an overall population of almost 3,000 people—the third largest population center in Virginia. Importantly, nearly half its residents were black, the highest percentage of any town in the state, and this reflected Petersburg's continued economic reliance on a system of slave labor to process and ship staple crops. Petersburg also had more free blacks—nearly ten percent of its population—than any other town in Virginia. Many of them were tradespeople who lived in segregated sections of Blandford and Pocohantas. However, the term “free,” when applied to black citizens, carried a limited meaning, since their full participation in the local economy was impeded by a wide range of cultural and financial barriers. As a result, early census figures for Petersburg do not necessarily serve as accurate indicators of economic activity, as might be the case in population centers with a more equitable distribution of wealth. In fact, the town retained much of its colonial socioeconomic configuration. A small number of influential landholding families continued to control a disproportionate percentage of the town's capital. Notably, in 1790 the top ten percent of Petersburg's 372 taxpayers controlled over one half of the town's taxable property, and the upper fifty percent controlled over ninety percent of the taxable wealth.⁵⁵

After 1780 Petersburg experienced other problems, in particular flood, fire, and disease. In August 1795 torrential rains flooded most of the lower part of town, including Old Street, the main commercial district along the river (also appropriately referred to as Water Street). Two-thirds of the buildings were either moved off their foundations or destroyed altogether.⁵⁶ Contributing to this disaster were the town's many decrepit, wood frame buildings that stood on inadequate foundations. Apparently most were rebuilt in a similar manner. Some of these wooden structures—noted as much for their promotion of unhealthy living situations as for their poor construction—were lost in a series of large fires in 1790, 1791, and 1796. In response to this recurrent problem, several successful fund-raising campaigns were initiated to purchase an engine and charter a fire company. Unfortunately, these efforts proved to be too late for one cabinetmaker, Alexander Taylor, who lost his house and shop to fire in 1792.

Disease came to the area in a variety of forms. Petersburg, like most eastern Virginia towns, was often described by early observers as an unhealthy location. In 1786 Josiah Flagg of New England wrote that it was “the most dirty place I ever saw. . . . Nine monthes of the year the mud is half leg deep, it is a very Sickly place owing in a great measure to its Situation. . . . the Vapours arising from [the Appomattox] contaminate the air, with the most pestilential disorders. . . . Agues, and fevers of Every kind prevail.”⁵⁷ The misguided fear that dangerous vapors arose from the river led to the planting of a screen of trees along the riverfront. Schoepf wrote in 1783 that “this town has a very unhealthy situation; its inhabitants seldom reach a great age, and have always to contend with intermittent fevers and their grievous sequelae.”⁵⁸ While some visitors certainly exaggerated their accounts of Petersburg's inhospitable climate, disease, which travelled from town to town in Virginia, remained a persistent problem.

Between 1780 and 1800, then, the outstanding evidence suggests that Petersburg experienced continued commercial development, even in the face of considerable economic and physical setbacks. The increased settlement of inland counties further promoted Petersburg's agricultural trade and its role as a center for wholesale, retail, and manufacturing operations. The town's business community steadily grew to meet the

needs of local and regional residents, although it did so in a market that was nearly one-half black and not allowed full social or economic freedom. Physical improvements arrived in the form of upgraded overland routes and the development of new roads that went even further inland. Construction of a canal to bypass the falls five miles above town, a project first proposed in the 1740s, was finally begun in 1795, and upon completion greatly increased commercial activity along the upper part of the Appomattox.

While other American port towns experienced disastrous economic difficulties after the Revolution, Petersburg survived because of its continued role as a regional marketplace. Its steady, although at times unpredictable, economic development resulted in a larger and more diversified trade community, which included furniture-makers. Ten distinct cabinetmaking operations were established in town between 1780 and 1800, a significant increase from the three documented pre-Revolutionary shops.⁵⁹ As mentioned earlier, the influx of Norfolk's cabinetmaking traditions continued with the arrival of John McCloud, who had apprenticed with John Selden in Norfolk beginning in 1773. By 1787 he ran his own successful cabinetmaking business in Blandford.⁶⁰ At the time of his death in 1795, McCloud's estate appraisal, personal property assessments, and land taxes reveal that he had achieved a relatively high degree of success for an area artisan (see Appendix B). Shortly thereafter, Irish-born James McCormick, who previously had worked in Baltimore, Alexandria, and Norfolk, opened a cabinet shop in Petersburg. Although he died within a few years of his arrival, he appears to have run a considerable operation. McCormick's estate included a wide variety of cabinetmaking materials, among them "twelve very handsome mahogany CHAIRS, nearly finished; a chest of Cabinet-maker's tools, a work bench and a mahogany desk."⁶¹ In its continuing provision of artisans, Norfolk apparently retained a significant degree of influence on the development of Petersburg's cabinet trade.

In addition to the migration of cabinetmakers from other parts of Virginia after 1780, Petersburg also attracted European-trained artisans. Richard Powell and Joseph Faux began working in town around 1783. While little is known of

their seven-year tenure, an announcement of their arrival in Fayetteville, North Carolina, in February 1790 strongly suggests that their Petersburg operation was extensive. In their new location, Powell and Faux advertised themselves as “Carpenters, Joiners, Cabinetmakers, Turners, Carvers, Gilders, and undertakers. . . . having been regularly reared in the above branches in Europe, and their many years experience in America, flatter themselves that they can give satisfaction to all who would wish to employ them.” Importantly, they offered Fayetteville residents Petersburg references that could attest to the quality of their wares. The size of their former operation is further indicated by the fact that they brought five apprentices and a journeyman with them, numbers that correlate with their Petersburg tax assessments and are typical of the internal growth experienced by furniture shops in town during this period.



Figure 45. Prestwoud, Mecklenburg County, Virginia, c. 1790. Owned by the Prestwoud Foundation, photograph by the author.

Petersburg's post-Revolutionary furniture-makers continued to serve a considerable regional market. For example, between 1790 and 1798 cabinetmaker and coffinmaker Samuel White made a large variety of furniture for Sir Peyton and Lady Jean Skipwith of Prestwoud (fig. 45) in Mecklenburg County. The Skipwiths, like many other affluent rural planters in Virginia's southside, ordered household wares from Petersburg and from sources in Norfolk and North Carolina. They relied on White for a broad range of case and seating forms, bedsteads, tables, washstands, and upholstered seating furniture, including a "French Sophy covered with sheeting," which may refer to a sofa (figs. 46 and 46a) still at Prestwoud, now a house museum. Also attributable to White are several mahogany beds at Prestwoud, one (fig. 47) with a veneered serpentine cornice, and the other (fig. 48) perhaps that described by the maker as a "tent bedstead with Pavillion top." Shared features on White's neat and plain bedsteads, another of which is in Colonial Williamsburg's collection (acc. 1978-30), include simply-turned columns and the rather uncommon use of red gum for the rails.



Figure 46. Sofa, possibly Petersburg, c. 1800. Mahogany with white pine and ash secondary. HOA 35 3/8", WOA 77 1/8", DOA 24". Collection of the Prestwoud Foundation, photograph by the author.



Figure 46a. Detail of sofa in fig. 43, showing arm and leg.



Figure 47. High post bedstead with original veneered cornice, attributed to Samuel White, c. 1795. Mabogany and mabogany veneer with yellow pine secondary and red gum rails. Dimensions not recorded. Collection of the Prestwold Foundation, photograph by the author.



Figure 48. High post bedstead with original shaped sweeps, attributed to Samuel White, mabogany with red gum rails and finials. HOA 105 1/8", WOA 57 5/8", DOA 79 1/8". Collection of the Prestvould Foundation, photograph by the author.

Significantly, White also fabricated “packing crates” to move the furniture to Prestwold, an important and rarely-recorded aspect of Virginia’s early furniture trades and a major concern for Petersburg’s artisans, who served a large regional market. The Skipwiths’ furniture probably travelled to Prestwold along the major postal and agricultural trade road that ran from Petersburg to Mecklenburg Court House, before turning toward North Carolina. Unfortunately, little documentation survives concerning the transport of urban Virginia wares to inland clients. A 1753 letter from Thomas Jones of Hanover County instructed cabinetmaker James Spiers of Williamsburg that the chairs recently ordered from him were to be “well Secured and packt in the Waggon that they take no damage.”⁶³ Also suggestive of regional practices is a 1799 English reference from the diary of William Holland, a Somerset clergyman who journeyed to another town to purchase a set of six parlor chairs. His new furniture was “packed very neatly in matts,” but then haphazardly “lashed behind” the battered chaise in which he travelled home. He was both pleased and surprised when the chairs were found safe upon arrival.⁶⁴ Even after 1800, by which time Virginia’s transportation systems were greatly improved, the Petersburg cabinetmaking firm of Caldwell and Wills felt the need to assure the public that their new furniture would be “packed up in the best manner.”⁶⁵

Further evidence of Petersburg’s growing post-Revolutionary furniture community exists in the appearance of a distinct cabinetmaking district along Old Street.⁶⁶ This location offered several advantages, notably its direct access to both Old Street, the town’s main commercial thoroughfare, and to the riverfront, which paralleled the road. Interestingly, a number of area furniture artisans may have even provided their own shipping transportation. The 1793 estate inventory of chairmaker Jonathan Russell indicated that he owned a “schooner” and a “lighter, or skew” (see Appendix D), not unlike Norfolk cabinetmaker Edmond Allmond who operated a ferry that ran from his shop at Ferry Point to Norfolk proper and to Portsmouth.⁶⁷

The 1790s also saw the emergence of Windsor chairmaking in Petersburg, a trade that subsequently assumed a large part of the local furniture trade. Windsor chairs, almost certainly imported from England and other American cities, were in Petersburg by the mid-eighteenth century. For example, while courting Ann Miller of nearby Flowerdew Hundred in 1760, Robert Bolling of Petersburg found her one day “seated in a large Windsor Chair in the Piazza.”⁶⁸ Advertisements and mercantile accounts indicate that after the Revolution, vast quantities of Windsor chairs were imported into Petersburg, mostly from large northern manufacturing centers. For example, in 1791 Philadelphia merchant Stephen Girard shipped six dozen Windsor chairs directly to retail stores in Petersburg.⁶⁹ By 1793, however, Petersburg-made Windsor seating furniture was also available. The first recorded specialist was Robert McKeen, who carried on “the business of WINDSOR CHAIR making, in all its various branches, at Dinwiddie Court-house,” south of town.⁷⁰ Petersburg residents interested in purchasing his chairs could be supplied with them at the Old Street shop of Francis Brown, a coachmaker. About 1795 McKeen moved his operation into Petersburg.⁷¹ Unfortunately, no pre-1800 Windsor chairs made in Petersburg have been identified, although they, like documented early nineteenth-century examples, were probably based on imported forms from the North.

Petersburg’s early makers, like McKeen, set the foundations for a substantial Windsor chairmaking tradition, one that played an important role in the trade community. At least a dozen individual Windsor chairmaking shops operated between 1790 and 1820, and with the frequent dissolution of partnerships and subsequent continuation of the business by one of the partners, the number may be considerably higher. The trade’s importance in Petersburg was also reflected in its intimate connection to the town’s considerable production of riding chairs. By 1800 the town boasted nearly twenty specialized coachmakers or riding chairmakers, a remarkably high figure for a relatively small town.⁷² These riding chair artisans were skilled in a wide range of decorative techniques, including sign or herald painting and coach japanning, as well as gilding and striping—techniques shared by local Windsor chairmakers, whose manufactures were frequently painted and often ornamented with gold striping. Displaying such skills is a ceremonial armchair

(fig. 49) made in 1831 for the Union Street Methodist Church (now the Washington Street Methodist Church) that was entirely grain-painted and decorated with gilt biblical references and a painted portrait (fig. 49a) of Jacob crossing the Jordan.



Figure 49. Windsor armchair, c. 1831. Maple seat and legs, hickory spindles. Collection of Washington Street Methodist Church, Petersburg, photograph by Hans Lorenz.



Figure 49a. Detail of Windsor chair in fig. 46, showing painted decoration on crest rail.

Because of the similar artistic techniques involved, a significant number of Petersburg coachmakers advertised their ability to decorate Windsor and fancy chairs. In fact, by the first part of the nineteenth century, over forty percent of the town's coachmakers were involved in the ornamentation, production, or repair of Windsor chairs.⁷³ The high number of coachmakers offering finished Windsons suggests that the unfinished productions of area Windsor chairmakers were either contracted out to coach shops or purchased by them. Even if this were not the case, it is clear that in Petersburg a trade alliance occurred between some Windsor chairmakers and riding chairmakers, and this business relationship allowed both participants to contribute their specialized skills. Furthermore, one particular riding chair design of this period was simply a wheeled platform with a Windsor seat, and at least one Petersburg Windsor chairmaker, Alexander Brown, provided riding chairmakers with wooden "gig" seats (fig. 50).⁷⁴ In sum, the rise of the town's Windsor trade owed a great deal to the contributions of its coachmakers.



Figure 50. Riding chair, northern neck of Virginia, 1795-1810. Woods not recorded, originally painted green. LOA 145". Courtesy of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union.

Increased furniture-making specialization came to Petersburg in other areas as well. By 1797 the cabinetmaking shop of Swann and Ellis employed a "professed upholsterer." Although earlier local cabinetmakers produced upholstered forms in their shops, this was the first reference to a full-time upholsterer. Swann and Ellis ran a shop of considerable size, and they offered area residents a full range of cabinetwares, including a variety of upholstered forms that were "made as elegant and on as cheap terms as can be imported from any foreign market."⁵ In 1797 the firm was assessed for five adult white males and three adult black males, another indication of Petersburg's support of larger cabinet shops after the war. While involved in the Petersburg business, Swann simultaneously ran a furniture-making shop in Richmond, making him the first of several local practitioners of what might be termed "branch furniture-making."⁶ Perhaps indicative of the neat and plain forms finished by Petersburg's upholsterers is an easy chair (fig. 51), now stripped of its upholstery, that descended in the Petersburg area in the Peebles family.



Figure 51. Easy chair, c. 1800. Mahogany with yellow pine frame, HOA 36 3/4", WOA 24", DOA 32 1/4". MRF S-3784. The frame of this example is square at the corners.

New businesses further reflected Petersburg's expanded trade offerings. Among them was Joseph Badger's operation, which combined his technical skills as a painter, coachmaker, paperhanger, and umbrella-maker with his management of a "Retail Colour Shop." Beginning in 1791, Badger's enterprise provided "all kinds of paints used in common, either in their natural state, or prepared for the brush," as well as "linseed, and train oil, putty, window glass and paint brushes" and, by 1799, "large glass suitable for pictures, clocks, bookcases, show boxes, &c. which he will cut to any size that may be wanting."⁷⁷ His business probably served as a vital source for glazing

supplies, paints, and clear finishes for many area furniture-makers. Along with other specialized mercantile operations, it probably helped centralize the resources needed by tradespeople, some of whom may have moved to Petersburg simply to take advantage of the expanded offerings.

Petersburg was not alone in the growth of its furniture-making community. Concurrent trade growth occurred in other eastern Virginia market centers, namely Norfolk, Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Alexandria. Is it possible, then, to relate the post-Revolutionary furniture-making traditions of these towns to Petersburg's? Did artisans across eastern Virginia, as they had prior to the war, continue to produce Anglo-influenced furniture forms that were stylistically and structurally related? Not necessarily. In fact, the shared colonial socioeconomic configuration of these towns began to diverge after the 1780s, and so did their furniture-making traditions.

While Petersburg's changing agricultural trade and its growing role as a regional market center provided the town with an economic buffer against numerous national and international events, both factors also apparently gave the town a certain amount of cultural protection as well, at least in the area of furniture design. Petersburg's substantial post-Revolutionary furniture community meant that residents no longer needed imported forms, at least not to the same extent they did in the early years of the town. The character of Petersburg's cabinetmaking traditions thus developed in a different manner than that of many other Virginia towns, a divergence clearly documented in the technical and aesthetic choices made by Petersburg artisans and their patrons.

After 1780 many American style centers were beginning to explore the neoclassical fashion that already had swept across Great Britain. Moving away from the carving and asymmetrical design commonly associated with rococo forms, they undertook the creation of furniture decorated with two-dimensional, geometrically-ordered surfaces, figured veneers, and contrasting inlays. In the post-1780 Petersburg furniture seen so far, it is evident that the town took to neoclassicism in its own decidedly conservative way, a development that speaks not to the stylistic ignorance of area artisans or patrons, but rather to the insular nature of the local economy and the continuation of well-established furniture-making practices.

Post-war economic restrictions and declining trade activity with Britain coincided with the expansion of America's large-scale commercial centers along the Atlantic seaboard. After 1780 trade activity and, as a result, cultural contact between coastal cities like New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Charleston increased. Reflecting the stronger relationship between these places was their shared production of similarly designed and ornamented neoclassical furniture forms. At the same time, Petersburg's loss of international agricultural trade and its concentrated efforts as an inland market center resulted, at least for the time being, in reduced contact with coastal networks. Petersburg effectively lost one important component of its economy, namely international trade, yet the town survived and even prospered by taking advantage of another component, its status as an important regional marketplace. This precarious balance was eventually disrupted in the first decades of the nineteenth century by America's rapid industrialization and the emergence of an influential national economic framework in which larger cities, and not Petersburg, served as furniture production centers.



Figure 52. Chest of drawers, c. 1800, Mabogany and mabogany veneer and yellow pine secondary. HOA 36 1/2", WOA 40 3/4", DOA 22 7/8". CWF acc. 1991-130, photograph by Hans Lorenz.

It is not surprising, then, that after the Revolution, locally-made furniture began to look less and less like that of Norfolk and other southern coastal centers. A Petersburg bowfronted chest of drawers (fig. 52) and similarly shaped clothespress (fig. 53) by the same maker typify the town's decoratively restrained interpretation of neoclassical forms and reflect its deeply-rooted preference for the earlier neat and



Figure 53. Clothespress, c. 1800. Mabogany and mabogany veneer with yellow pine and poplar secondary. HOA 76 1/2", WOA 47", DOA 26". Collection of the Petersburg Museums, City of Petersburg, photograph by Hans Lorenz.

plain style. In fact, the latter example mirrors earlier structural practices in its unusual use of vertically-laminated foot blocking. Apparently Petersburg's reduced emphasis on coastal trade allowed its furniture artisans to focus on the manufacture of goods for a regional market, a development promoted by patrons that resulted in the rather conservative retention of earlier trade traditions.

Numerous manifestations of Petersburg's continuing neat and plain furniture fashions have survived, including a wide range of table forms. Attributable to Petersburg makers on the basis of their stylistic and structural relationships to other area forms, and their strong local histories, are a mahogany card table (fig. 54) that descended in the Bland family of Amelia



Figure 54. Card table, c. 1795. Mahogany and mahogany veneer with oak and yellow pine secondary. Dimensions not recorded. MRF S-6555.



Figure 55. Pembroke table, c. 1790. Walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 28", WOA (closed) 18 1/2", WOA (open) 34", DOA 30 3/4". Collection of Mr. William Goode Berville, photograph by Hans Lorenz.

County and a Pembroke table (fig. 55) owned by the Ruffin family of Prince George County. In addition to the common use of yellow pine as a secondary wood, the swing-leg on the card table, like other Petersburg tables, has a finger joint that passes through the rail. Sliding battens, on figure 55, support the leaves, an approach also evident on a straight-legged mahogany Pembroke table with poplar and white pine secondary woods that descended in the Harrison family of Prince George County (Colonial Williamsburg acc. 1959-185). Other similar neat and plain forms (MRF S-7134, S-7583, and S-6558) have been recorded that reflect neoclassical design in the use of tapered legs.



Figure 56. Table, 1800-1810. Birch with yellow pine secondary. HOA 28", WOA 23", DOA 19". MRF S-6549.

Unlike many of their other American counterparts, however, they remained essentially unornamented (fig. 56). Slightly more decorative is a group of mahogany dressing or writing tables (fig. 57), which display figured veneers on the drawer fronts and lightwood stringing around the drawers and along the legs and aprons. The table illustrated here, along with another example (MRF S-6573), was found in Petersburg. Possibly related is a cellaret (MRF S-7623) that descended locally. It also has lightwood stringing up the legs and across the skirt, as well as two-color banding and an ovoid inlay on the top.

Even when Petersburg's makers produced up-to-date neo-classical forms, they retained the same conservative sense of decoration. For example, a mahogany side chair (fig. 58) that descended in the Spottswood family displays only minimal scratch-beading on the banisters. Its attribution to Petersburg is supported by a closely-related side chair that remains in the Petersburg family that originally owned it. Another (MRF S-3603)



Figure 57. Dressing or writing table, c. 1800. Walnut and walnut veneer with lightwood stringing and yellow pine secondary. HOA 28 3/4", WOA 20 1/2", DOA 18 1/8". MRF S-6493.

displays many similarities to the Spottswood family piece and was found in Portsmouth in the twentieth century. Also possibly produced by a Petersburg artisan is a slightly more ambitious side chair (fig. 59) that descended in the Ruffin family of Prince



Figure 58. Side chair, c. 1800. Mahogany with yellow pine secondary. HOA 34 1/2", HOA (at seat) 16 1/2", DOA 17". Collection of Dr. Harold M. Goodman, photograph by Hans Lorenz.



Figure 59. Side chair, possibly Petersburg, c. 1810. Mahogany. HOA 35 1/2", HOA (at seat) 16 1/2", WOA 20 3/4", DOA 17". MRF S-7237.

George County. It has a carved central banister surrounded on either side by columnar vertical elements with foliated capitals. A similar amount of carving appears on another chair (MRF S-6544) found in the Petersburg area with a serpentine crest rail and pointed, flared ears.

While it is possible to attribute certain neat and plain post-Revolutionary forms to Petersburg on the basis of structural and conceptual ties to earlier traditions, and their long histories in area families, it is important to recognize that the area's artisans and patrons were not alone in these conservative design choices. Numerous examples of similarly restrained neoclassical wares were produced by British artisans, particularly those working in provincial towns, although this stylistic relationship appears to be less an indication of direct trade links than a reflection of comparable socioeconomic conditions. Even sophisticated British neoclassical design books such as Hepplewhite's *Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, published in London in 1788, illustrated patterns for neat and plain forms (fig. 60). Related forms were also produced in many other smaller American market towns and rural areas, some of which may have experienced conditions similar to those in eighteenth-century Petersburg.⁷⁸

As we have seen, Petersburg's furniture-making community experienced considerable expansion and diversification in the years between 1780 and 1800. While growth continued after that time, it did so within a rapidly changing cultural context that eventually led to the decline of the town's furniture production. After 1800, Petersburg's artisans, like those in many southern coastal towns, increasingly faced competition from the ever-growing importation of fashionable and affordable furniture from northern manufacturing centers. Furniture industries in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Salem, Portsmouth, and Baltimore were, by this time, producing large amounts of stylish furniture for export, and they found a receptive market in the South. In the face of this new competition, some eastern Virginia cabinetmakers, such as James Woodward of Norfolk, felt compelled to advertise their ability to produce wares "equal to any importation."⁷⁹ Petersburg's early nineteenth-century furniture-makers, striving to keep pace with the stylish imports, steadily moved away from their regionally distinct neat and plain fashion toward

Wardrobe.



Figure 60. Press design from Hepplewhite's Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide, 3rd. edition, 1795, plate 85. Photograph by Hans Lorenz.

northern-influenced designs, but their efforts were not substantial enough to prevent the town's eventual dependence on imported furniture.

These trade and design changes were effected by a number of factors. Continued transportation improvements expanded Petersburg's role as a regional market center. In 1795 the Upper Appomattox Company was chartered to create a safe, weather-proof alternative around the falls. Within fifteen years a

five-and-a-half mile long canal system, which included a system of locks and terminated at a basin in the center of town, was completed. The same organization oversaw the clearing of navigation all the way to Planterstown, twenty-three miles above Farmville in Prince Edward County, a move which significantly extended Petersburg's market influence.⁸⁰ In the town itself road improvements, such as the 1813 paving of Bollingbrook Street and the creation of new toll roads and bridges, brought in added revenue. However, even with these marked physical improvements, Petersburg experienced a number of significant economic difficulties after 1800.

Military and diplomatic conflicts in Europe continued to disrupt America's coastal trading centers. American ships travelling to British markets in the West Indies were increasingly targeted by French and Spanish privateers, who sought direct commercial activity with their own colonial outposts. The British continued their retaliatory trade actions as well. In response to this interference, Thomas Jefferson promoted the Embargo Act of 1807, a protectionist plan that severely restricted the amount of international trade passing through American ports. He theorized that the loss of American commerce would inspire European powers to resolve the trade problems. Instead, Europe simply turned to other markets, and American coastal cities were devastated. Southern ports were particularly hard hit; in Norfolk shipworkers lost their jobs, and warehouses fell dormant. As a result of these events, Petersburg's trade with Norfolk declined considerably, and many local wholesale and retail merchants were forced into other business ventures.⁸¹ Typical was the 1811 announcement made by the large mercantile firm of Halliday and Maben, who "declined their dry goods business until relations with England had improved."⁸²

By June 1812 England and America were again at war. America responded to an extensive British naval blockade by imposing even harsher trade restrictions, which further reduced the participation of Virginia's fall-line towns in coastal trade. However, Petersburg's economy remained relatively stable, as it had directly after the Revolution. According to a broad range of indicators, both the town and its surrounding counties continued to grow, thereby providing more clients for area tradespeople. In the 1790s Petersburg had a population of

around 3,000 people and by the early 1820s there were more than 8,000 residents. Contributing to this development were the large number of Virginia planters who, in their quest for arable land, turned to the Southside.⁸³

Petersburg continued to grow during these difficult years, but it did so by altering many of its earlier socioeconomic features, changes that proved devastating to its furniture-making community. As Suzanne Lebsock explained, "From about 1805 to 1820, Petersburg lost much of its frontier character, and in its place gained more complexity (and) greater gentility."⁸⁴ Like most other American urban centers, the town was gradually incorporated into the framework of an emerging national economy, a system that promoted the regional development of large-scale, specialized industries.⁸⁵ Northern manufacturing centers increased their role as the primary producers and exporters of fashionable and affordable goods. In contrast, many southern towns, including Petersburg, focused on the large-scale processing of area resources such as cotton, tobacco, iron, wheat, and allied products. Reflecting the town's concentration on retail and industrial developments is the post-1800 configuration of the Common Hall, Petersburg's main legislative body. Artisans, who previously had more of a presence in that body, gradually lost seats to merchants and industrialists, who increasingly were able to direct public policy to meet their specific business needs by promoting physical improvements and financial incentives that augmented the town's commercial distribution networks. To a great extent, their agenda was accomplished at the expense of the town's traditionally-ordered trade shops, including furniture-making operations.

Hastening Petersburg's socioeconomic transformation was the catastrophic fire of 1815, which consumed much of the commercial district. Even with their earlier adoption of stricter building regulations and the establishment of firefighting organizations in the 1790s, residents experienced continual problems with fire, primarily because the central part of town still consisted of dilapidated wooden shops, dwellings, and warehouses. As late as 1814 a visitor noted, "that part of town where business is transacted is irregular, low, and dirty."⁸⁶ On the night of 15 July 1815 a fire broke out at the Bollingbrook Street house of John Walker. The blaze headed west, consuming both sides

of the road before moving north and destroying part of Sycamore Street; it then moved west again, down Old Street and terminated partway along this vital commercial thoroughfare (fig. 61). More than five hundred houses, or approximately two-thirds of the downtown area, were burned—a startling fact considering that just twenty-five years earlier, the entire town consisted of only three hundred buildings. Damage from the blaze was estimated at three million dollars. A report of the “conflagration” summarized its devastating effects: “The gay, the flourishing town of Petersburg has been visited by a calamity, which, for the suffering, the distress, the wretchedness it has caused, may truly be termed, if language have the power adequately to paint its horrors, unparalleled, overwhelming, dreadful. . . . to think what a change a few hours have produced.”⁸⁷

The human and, to a greater extent, material loss from the fire was massive, yet in some respects the disaster served the

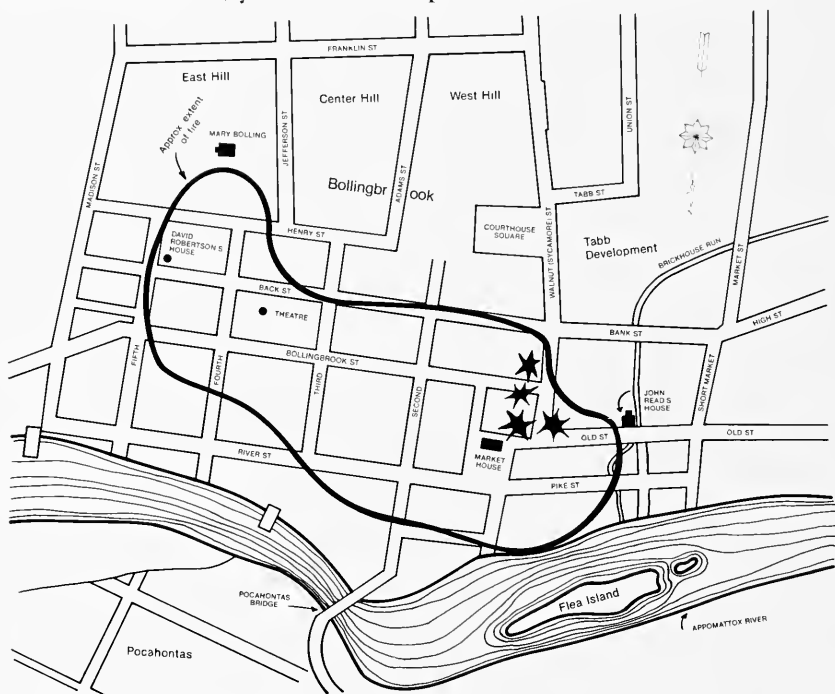


Figure 61. Map of Petersburg showing the path of the 1815 fire. Line drawing by Ron Rice based on a map conceived by William Graham.

town well, for after the fire Petersburg was forever changed. One commentator proclaimed that the events of “one short July night obliterated more eye sores, and abated more nuisances than the proprietors of real estate would have done in half a generation.”⁸⁸ The many unsightly, poorly-managed “wooden frames of aged huts” were replaced by “buildings that would stand an examination with the best constructed mercantile houses in Baltimore, Philadelphia, or New-York.”⁸⁹ New and expensive brick buildings in the commercial district attracted outside industry to Petersburg and these structures served as physical evidence of the town’s commitment toward large-scale manufacturing and commercial enterprises.

As Petersburg found its niche in America’s emerging national industrial economy and redirected its commerce after the fire, many of its artisans were squeezed out of the market. Significantly, between 1790 and 1820 at least eleven furniture-makers left town and followed the trade routes into North Carolina, primarily to Hillsborough, Raleigh, Halifax, Warrenton, and other smaller towns that were not yet fully incorporated into the national economy. This is only one example of the highs and lows Petersburg’s furniture community experienced in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. After 1800, the number and size of furniture shops increased considerably; for the thirty-five year period prior to 1800 Petersburg had supported only eleven full-time cabinetmaking operations. For the twenty year period after 1800, more than twenty cabinetmaking shops appeared, in addition to nearly a dozen Windsor and fancy chair manufactories, and several upholstery operations. Indeed, between 1800 and 1820 Petersburg’s furniture trades attained their most productive level. At the same time, however, furniture exports from America’s emerging industrial centers—primarily in the North—arrived in far greater numbers and began to place an increasing burden on the town’s furniture artisans.

While evidence clearly indicates that Petersburg never became a major furniture production center for the American market, its role as a regional production center in the early nineteenth century was significant and, in fact, represents an important facet of furniture-making in early America. The distinctive furniture productions of smaller American market towns in this period offer insights into how artisans responded

to the industrialization and mechanization of their trades and how, as in Petersburg's case, they retained certain deeply-rooted and culturally-significant trade practices—idiosyncrasies that were rapidly disappearing in larger manufacturing centers.

To understand the growth of Petersburg's furniture community after 1800, it is essential to recognize several significant regional developments. Local artisans reaped the benefits of new methods of processing raw materials. Such progress was hastened by significant transportation improvements and technological advancements. For example, furniture-makers took advantage of Petersburg's emergence as a regional center for the wood trade. By 1810 at least 112 sawmills were in operation throughout Virginia, including many along the Appomattox River.⁹⁰ One well-established Petersburg operator was Baldwin Pearce, a carpenter who by 1801 also owned a "screw machine," another important technological advancement. In addition to the productions of regional sawmills, massive quantities of wood were imported into Petersburg from other states and international markets. In 1811, for example, the inventory of merchant Edward Stokes included 20,000 feet of imported inch plank. A few years later Petersburg cabinetmaker John DeJernatt received "45,000 feet of the best quality island and bay MAHOGANY," a portion of which was "cut for the use of builders, for stairways, inside doors, sashes &c."⁹² With such offerings to choose from, the town's artisans certainly did not suffer from a lack of resources.

Petersburg's furniture-makers also benefitted from the opening of nearby nail manufactories. Prior to 1800 most of their wrought iron nails were imported from England, where production capabilities were considerably more advanced. By the start of the nineteenth century, however, America developed quicker and less expensive methods for making cut nails. In 1805 Levin Dorsey of Norfolk had a "complete set of machinery. . . to produce 500 to 600 lbs. of Nails daily."⁹³ Shortly thereafter, several Petersburg nail manufactories were established, including Sceva Thayer's prolific Petersburg Nail Factory, which opened in 1811. Thayer's cut nails and brads were sold both at his factory as well as at retail stores in the area.⁹⁴ Petersburg's increased ability to process raw materials and manufacture products with such efficiency supported the continued growth of its artisan community.

America's industrial developments and transportation improvements also meant that Petersburg tradespeople gained access to a wider range of materials than ever before. "Hard Ware" stores opened, including the firm of Peter and Giese, which offered "American Manufactured" looking glasses, as well as window glass and a wide variety of specialized tools. Francis Follet's shop, located at the sign of the "Gilt Anvil," sold a broad range of furniture hardware, including "cabinet mounting."⁹⁵ Although many of these items had been available in the area before, they were now arriving directly in town in far greater numbers.

In addition to such external improvements, Petersburg's furniture-making trades experienced several significant internal developments. Furniture-makers—and many other artisans—increasingly entered into partnerships as a means of pooling their resources, meeting the rising costs of operating a business, and keeping pace with the importation of furniture wares. Partnerships became especially common among Windsor chairmakers, whose trade skills were well suited to large-scale production. Numerous joint furniture-making ventures appeared in town during this period, although, interestingly, most did not last more than a year or two. When the partnerships dissolved, it was common for one artisan to retain control of the shop while the other frequently moved on to different partnerships, locally or in other cities. As a result, confusing and rather incestuous patterns of business relationships involving early nineteenth-century Petersburg furniture-makers became common.

The varied career of Leonard Seaton illustrates the extent to which some Petersburg artisans utilized the partnership system. In 1812 he took over the Richmond Windsor chairmaking firm of Hobday and Seaton after John Hobday entered into a new partnership with James Barnes. In 1814 Seaton moved to Petersburg, where he established a shop with Graves Matthews. Examples of their work (figs. 62 and 62a) survive. Within a year, however, the partnership failed, and Seaton returned to Richmond, while Matthews remained in Petersburg, where he later formed a Windsor chairmaking partnership with Alexander Brown before moving down to Raleigh into yet another partnership. By 1818 Seaton was back in Petersburg, involved in a short-lived joint venture with Hobday's ex-partner, James Barnes.



Figure 62. Windsor side chair, by Seaton and Matthews, 1814. Hickory and maple. Dimensions not recorded. Private collection, photograph by Hans Lorenz.



Figure 62a. Seaton and Matthews label from chair in fig. 62.

Such complicated patterns suggest that furniture-makers were able to move from shop to shop without extensive damage to their careers, a conclusion further supported by the relative financial stability evidenced in Petersburg's tax records. Partnerships not only allowed for increased production and reduced the cost of materials, rent, and advertising, but apparently served as an efficient means of legitimating the artisan's reputation in the town's trade community.

Some partnerships involved artisans in completely different trades. In 1806 John Priest and George Dillworth advertised their sale of Windsor chairs, wheat fans, wire work, riding chairs, and varnish. A few years later Priest relocated to Nashville, Tennessee, where he continued to produce Windsor furniture, while Dillworth remained in Petersburg, manufacturing wheat fans, "wove wire," and "rolling screens."⁹⁶ Although the two worked in unrelated trades, they apparently saw an advantage in pooling their resources. Another interesting partnership occurred in 1814 with the union of John Lorrain and Louis Layssard, who advertised the assembly and repair of looking glasses. When this venture failed, Layssard went on to other furniture-making, blacksmithing, and entrepreneurial endeavors both in Petersburg and in North Carolina. Lorrain

remained in town painting floorcloths, signs, formal landscapes, and portraits. In sum, while often short-lived, Petersburg's numerous early nineteenth-century trade partnerships further document the expansion of the artisan community. Additionally, these joint business ventures frequently marked the arrival of certain specialized skills, such as wire weaving and portrait painting, not present during the colonial period when the town's small population and embryonic role as a regional commercial center could not support such services.

The appearance of distinct upholstery shops also indicates the ongoing diversification of Petersburg's furniture trades. By 1808 John Vaughan, who first worked in town as a coachmaker, advertised as an upholsterer who undertook "to furnish SOFAS & CHAIRS of every description, Bed and Window CORNICES and CURTAINS." In a rare appeal aimed at both genders, he also advised "ladies and gentlemen" that he could repair and restuff "All kinds of sofas and Easy Chairs."⁹⁷ Petersburg attracted upholsterers from other American furniture-making centers as well. Before moving to town in 1814, William Neal operated upholstery shops in Boston and in Baltimore where he publicized his "many years experience in France and England" and his ability to provide clients with "Drawing-room Curtains and Drapery of every description, executed in the first stile and elegance." Upon his arrival in Petersburg, Neal established his upholstery business in part of John DeJernatt's extensive cabinetmaking operation. His services mirrored Vaughan's, with the additional skill of wallpapering.⁹⁸

The net result of these internal and external trade improvements was that Petersburg's furniture-makers were able to provide a broader range and greater quantities of wares than ever before, production necessitated by the rapidly-growing population. Developments in the Windsor trade perhaps offered the clearest testimony to this expansion. Joel Brown, who worked in town for more than twenty years, was Petersburg's most successful early nineteenth-century Windsor chairmaker. Like a number of other local artisans, he began as a riding chairmaker and then turned to the full-time production of Windsor furniture. He probably learned the turning and joinery skills necessary for both trades from his father, Samuel Brown, of Exeter Mills in Chesterfield County, who owned "all of the tools belonging to a wheel-wrights shop."⁹⁹ The same may well



Figure 63. Windsor side chair, by Joel Brown, c. 1810. Hickory crest and spindles and poplar seat. HOA 36", HOA (at seat) 16 1/4", WOA 21 1/2". MRF S-9965. This chair is stamped "JL BROWN."

be true of Alexander and Archer Brown, who appear to have been Joel's relatives and who were also involved in Petersburg Windsor chairmaking operations. In 1804 Joel advertised a variety of riding chairs, as well as "15 Dozen WINDSOR CHAIRS, Of different kinds." Two years later he described his Windsor chairs as "elegant gilt, striped and plain," also a reflection of his coach painting skills. Shortly thereafter, Brown advertised that his "Windsor Chair Manufactory" had on hand four hundred chairs and was finishing more every day, impressive production figures for a town of Petersburg's size.¹⁰⁰ Some of Brown's designs, such as a bowback side chair (figs. 63 and 63a), appear to have been strongly influenced by the numerous imported Philadelphia Windsors. He also made interesting rodback chairs (fig. 64), as well as upholstered Windsors, like those made for the Skipwiths of Prestwold, which reflect a popular early nineteenth-century design (fig. 65). Brown moved his business down to Raleigh (fig. 66) in 1816, but his prolific Old Street operation suggests the impressive size and production capabilities of Petersburg's larger shops.

A closer look at Brown's business indicates that Petersburg's Windsor chairmakers provided a wide variety of services. In



Figure 63a. Detail of chair in fig. 63, showing Brown's stamp.



Figure 64. Windsor side chair, by Joel Brown, c. 1810. Hickory crest and spindles and poplar seat. HOA 30 3/4", HOA (at seat) 14 1/4", WOA 19 1/2". MRF S-4611. This chair bears Brown's label.



Figure 65. Detail of The Painter's Triumph illustrating an upholstered Windsor chair, oil on canvas, by William Sidney Mount, 1838. HOA 19 1/2", WOA 23 1/2. Collection of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, photograph by Hans Lorenz.



Figure 67. Windsor crib, c. 1820. Walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 44 1/2", WOA 45 1/2", DOA 27 1/2". MRF S-7111.

Brown painted houses and produced turned architectural elements such as balusters and "columns for porticoes and porches in the neatest and most approved style."¹⁰² He was not alone among Virginia's Windsor chairmakers in providing such a broad range of services and skills. Robert and Andrew McKim of Richmond turned architectural elements and wooden ma-

chine parts for the Virginia Manufactory of Arms, while the Petersburg Windsor and fancy chairmaking firm of Seaton and Matthews provided “turning executed in all its various branches to suit mechanics.”¹⁰³ The considerable output and diverse offerings of Petersburg’s Windsor shops clearly demonstrate the town’s role as an important regional chairmaking center.

Similar growth occurred among Petersburg’s early nineteenth-century cabinetmaking operations. When George Mason died in 1813, his estate included a three-story brick shop with at least eight workbenches and a well-stocked wareroom specifically meant for the display and sale of finished furniture (see Appendix C). At the time of his death in 1820, cabinetmaker Alexander Taylor was involved in a large commission to refurnish the Blandford Lodge, which had burned down in 1819. Taylor’s shop included twelve workbenches, three tool chests, a lathe, and an extensive assortment of cabinetmaking tools (see Appendix E). Just as impressive was John DeJernatt’s operation. His shop alone was insured for the astounding sum of \$4,000, while his furniture stock was described as “perhaps the most extensive in the state, amounting to upwards of \$5,000—and for elegance, taste, and quality, not surpassed any where.”¹⁰⁴ For several years DeJernatt simultaneously ran a second furniture shop in Richmond.

After 1800 Petersburg’s cabinetmakers provided a wider array of products than ever before. The partnership of Fore and Robertson advertised their manufacture of many fashionable furniture forms, including “side-boards and bureaus, card, dining, and pembroke tables, secretaries and bookcases, candle and wash stands, &c. &c.”¹⁰⁵ In 1815 William H. Russell took over the substantial cabinetmaking business started by Mason, his father-in-law. He advertised “a very excellent stock of the best St. Domingo Mahogany, amongst which are some elegant curls” and added that he was able to “finish work of every description and of the most fashionable kind, in a superior style to any in the place, having the best workmen procured.” Russell also provided “turnings of every description.”¹⁰⁶ Such notices clearly illustrate the substantial evolution of Petersburg’s furniture trades since the colonial period.

Several mahogany veneered sideboards (fig. 68) that descended in the Petersburg area display decorative elements—particularly in the leg and foot-design-related to other furniture

with regional histories, and may well reflect the capabilities of the town's larger cabinet shops. The sideboard illustrated here was originally owned by Henry Robertson of present-day Nottoway County (in the 1780s it was still a part of Amelia). It then descended through the Watson family of Prince George and Dinwiddie counties. Virtually identical is another sideboard (MRF S-6545) with a more recent Prince George and Dinwiddie history. A related form (MRF S-2487) has also been recorded. Displaying closely related legs are an intriguing tambour-fronted work or sewing table (fig. 69) that descended in the Budd family of Petersburg and a Pembroke table (fig. 70) found in town in the early twentieth century. While the sewing table is the only tambour-fronted example with a Petersburg history recorded, both its construction and general design reflect other local forms. The Pembroke table is closely related to a number of other tables in private collections.

Petersburg's furniture operations expanded not only in size, but also in their increasing inclusion of blacks and women in more significant roles. Profound advances were made by black



Figure 68. Sideboard, possibly Petersburg, c. 1820. Mabogany and mabogany veneer with yellow pine and poplar secondary. HOA 54 1/2", WOA 78 1/2", DOA 29 1/8". MRF S-7185.



Figure 69. Sewing or work table, possibly Petersburg, c. 1820. Mahogany and mahogany veneer with poplar secondary. HOA 29", WOA 26", DOA 12 3/4". MRF S-6169.



Figure 70. Pembroke table, c. 1820. Mahogany with walnut gates and yellow pine secondary. HOA 28 1/2", WOA (closed) 20 3/8", WOA (open) 38 5/8", DOA 29". Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Maurice S. Rosenberg, photograph by the author.

furniture-makers, albeit slowly in an agricultural trade town where African-Americans primarily processed tobacco and other staple crops. Their involvement in Virginia cabinetmaking can be documented as early as the mid-eighteenth century, although invariably in subservient positions. For example, in 1755 Peter Scott of Williamsburg offered for sale "Two Negroes, bred to the business of a Cabinetmaker."¹⁰ After the Revolution, Virginia's rising free black population resulted in more independent black artisans, but earlier patterns of segregation and oppression remained largely intact. Of Petersburg's total population of 3,500 citizens in 1800, 1,400 were slaves and 428 were free blacks.

In 1815 John Ventus, who apprenticed and then worked as a cabinetmaker in Norfolk, opened a shop with John Raymond, also a free black. They lived and worked in the heart of the furniture-making district on Old Street, on the property of Betsey Allegrue, a business woman who, like Raymond and many other local blacks, was probably a native of Haiti.¹⁰⁸ Raymond and Ventus sold a wide variety of cabinetwares which they could "recommend and dispose of on as accommodating terms, as any manufactory in the Borough. . . . in the best and most fashionable style."¹⁰⁹ That a business was operated by black artisans in a building with a black owner and advertised its services in direct competition to white artisans represented a significant socioeconomic achievement. Other free blacks in the furniture trades include Toma, a native of Greenville County, who was apprenticed to George Mason in 1809.¹¹⁰

Women also made progress in Petersburg's furniture-making community during the early nineteenth century. In fact, across Virginia a small number of women broke through that occupation's significant gender barriers. In 1802 a "Mrs. Wells" of Fredericksburg advertised her "business of AN UPHOLDSTRESS." Mrs. Rachel Atkins of Norfolk enjoyed a brief career as a "Carver, Gilder, and Picture Frame Maker."¹¹¹ In Petersburg, Mary Mason, the daughter of chairmaker Jonathan Russell, took over an extensive cabinetmaking operation after the death of her husband, cabinetmaker George Mason. With her brother William H. Russell acting as shop foreman, she managed the business for several years until she remarried. However, Mary Mason's involvement in an undomestic trade represents the exception rather than the rule for women. According to Lebsack, "occupational choices were few, earnings were pitiful, and economic independence was very difficult to achieve."¹¹² Poor young women, both black and white, more commonly worked in the local tobacco and cotton processing industries. Few, at any socioeconomic level, opened businesses of their own. Even so, the trade advances made by women and blacks after 1800 represent significant cultural achievements and constitute important topics warranting further study.

In many respects, then, Petersburg's furniture trades experienced substantial development in the first few decades of the nineteenth century. Both the size and diversity of operations

grew, as did the clientele they were serving. Windsor chairmakers, to cite just one example, attained production levels that reflected Petersburg's expanded role as a regional furniture-making center, while its cabinetmakers during this period offered a wider range of fashionable furniture forms. The town's changing economic conditions led to the increased appearance of partnerships among artisans trying to cope with rising costs and the need for higher production. However, other simultaneous economic developments proved harmful to Petersburg's furniture-making community and eventually led to its decline. By 1820, numerous artisans, even successful ones like John DeJernatt, were either bankrupt, involved in new and unrelated business ventures, or no longer in town.

Most damaging to the furniture community was Petersburg's incorporation into America's emerging national economy and its subsequent dependence on imported wares and artisans. This pattern was common to many southern urban centers in the first decades of the nineteenth century and is indicative of the region's decreased reliance on trade with England. After 1800, trade contact between American coastal centers expanded considerably, and furniture based on northern prototypes was increasingly produced by southern artisans. Facilitating this style migration were significant national transportation improvements and extensive northern industrial development, which allowed for large quantities of fashionable and competitively-priced northern furniture to move southward. Revealingly, by 1820 the dominance of larger northern shops and industrial manufacturing procedures had a somewhat homogenizing effect on American furniture design, and for forms made after that time it becomes progressively more difficult to identify any specific regional cabinetmaking practices. Indeed, monitoring distinctive regional trade traditions after 1820 may best be accomplished by studying the areas to which artisans moved in order to escape the competition created by the imported wares; in the case of Petersburg, this would mean looking to the North Carolina towns where many artisans relocated.¹¹³

Although Petersburg's traditionally-ordered furniture shops were substantially larger than they had been in the eighteenth century, they were not capable of producing on an industrial level. Furthermore, they proved poorly suited to keep pace

with technological improvements necessitated by changing aesthetic values in furniture design. With the advent of neoclassicism and its use of highly-figured veneers and complicated, multi-part inlays, large-scale manufactories developed precise and repetitive production methods. Perhaps more significantly, these manufactories provided full-time employment for highly specialized tradespeople like inlaymakers and veneermakers.¹¹⁴ Contrary to these developments, Petersburg apparently continued to prefer neat and plain furniture well into the nineteenth century. This predilection is evidenced by a table (fig. 71) that descended in cabinetmaker George Mason's family and a small



Figure 71. Pembroke table, probably by George Mason or William H. Russell, c. 1810. Mahogany with oak and yellow pine secondary. HOA 28 1/4", WOA (open) 37 1/2", WOA (closed) 19 1/2", DOA 29 5/8". MRF5-7134.

sideboard (fig. 72) with a desk interior (fig. 72a) signed "John Clarke, his drawer, made and sold by him at his shop in Old Street, Petersburg." Directly related to the Mason table are two identical forms; one (MRF S-7583) descended in a Prince Edward and Lunenburg County family, and the other (MRF S-6558) was found in Petersburg. Interestingly, the signed desk interior on the Clarke example was made by a more skilled artisan than the rest of the piece, suggesting that the two parts were made in different shops. A similarly neat and plain chest of drawers (MRF S-7637) came out of a Nottoway County estate.

Petersburg's early nineteenth-century production of forms that adhered to older and less-complicated traditions signifies that the town never fully developed the new specialty trades. Instead they blossomed in America's larger furniture-making



Figure 72. Sideboard with secretary drawer, c. 1810. Mabogany and mabogany veneer with oak and yellow pine secondary. HOA 48", WOA 48", DOA 20". Collection of Brad and Rita Siegmund, photograph by the author.

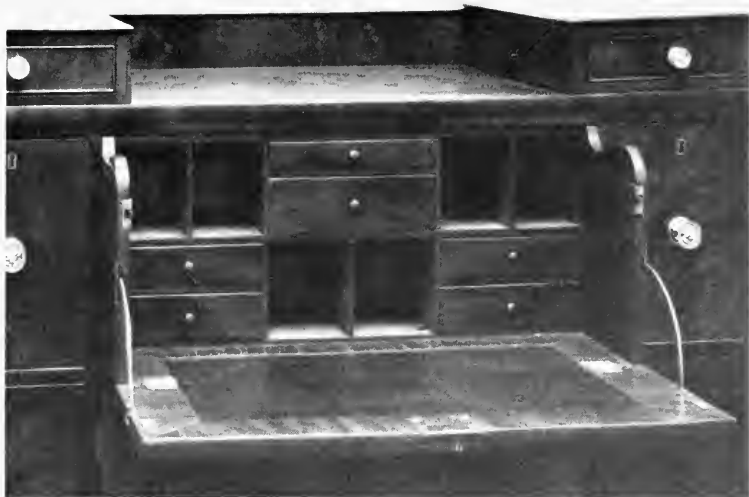


Figure 72a. Detail of sideboard in fig. 72, showing secretary drawer interior.

cities, like Boston, Portsmouth, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Norfolk, and Charleston. Fashionable neoclassical wares from the northern centers were increasingly imported into Petersburg after 1800 and by 1820 assumed a large portion of its furniture market. In 1816 John DeJernatt, who ran one of Petersburg's largest cabinet shops at that time, felt compelled to assure the public that his manufactures compared favorably with the many "specimens" of northern furniture already in the town. He hastened to add that if he could "meet with sufficient encouragement, it would enable him to advance our own market, by giving the most approved workmen such prices as are given in New York for the best work."¹⁵ However, such xenophobic pleas were no match for the inevitable changes in Petersburg's economy.

Contributing to the migration of northern furniture designs was the increased arrival of northern artisans who were unable to find steady employment in their highly-competitive and over-saturated home markets. After working in Philadelphia for

several years, Henry Leiper moved to Petersburg and, in 1802, became involved in a cabinetmaking partnership with Thomas Fenner. In 1807 the *Petersburg Intelligencer* announced the arrival of "Jeremiah Parmelle, from the northward, cabinet maker," one year after a "Samuel Parmele, from New York" opened a furniture-making shop in Wilmington, North Carolina.¹¹⁶ By 1816 cabinetmaker and ware-room operator William Russell not only had a "fresh supply of Fancy and Windsor chairs from New York" and "curled hair mattresses from Philadelphia," but also "six or seven workmen, who served their time in the first shops in Philadelphia, New-York and Baltimore."¹¹⁷

Probably reflecting the work of an immigrant furniture-maker is a rule-jointed clothespress (fig. 73), now at Colonial Williamsburg, that was originally owned by the Haxall family of Petersburg. While in most respects it mirrors common Philadelphia design and construction, the press was attributed to Williamsburg, primarily on the basis of composite foot blocking evidence.¹¹⁸ Importantly, however, composite foot blocking, a common British technique, has also been identified in Philadelphia, as has the unusual use of rule-jointed doors like those found on this piece and two others (see figs. 23 and 23a) with Petersburg histories. Composite feet also were employed by Annapolis cabinetmaker John Shaw. The press was also said to have full-bottom dustboards, another Williamsburg feature. However, the dustboards are not the full bottom type, but rather are slightly thinner than the drawer blades, and chamfered on the sides; they are set into thin dadoes in the case, and secured from below with small wedges—a design that mirrors the prevalent Philadelphia approach. The press's history also suggests an attribution other than Williamsburg. The first of the Haxall brothers (five in all) to settle in Petersburg emigrated from England in 1780, by which time furniture-making in Williamsburg was largely defunct. Considering both the structural and historical evidence, a more tenable theory is that the press probably was made by a Philadelphia-trained artisan who moved to Petersburg, or perhaps to Norfolk or Richmond, where the Haxalls conducted some of their mercantile business.¹¹⁹

Northern artisans appeared in other trades as well. Sterling Woodward, a coachmaker in Dinwiddie County who for a short time rented shop space to a Windsor chairmaker, announced his extensive range of riding chairs, gigs, sulkeys, razees, stages,



Figure 73. Clothespress with secretary drawer, probably Petersburg, Richmond, or Norfolk, c. 1780. Mabogany with yellow pine, red cedar, poplar, and walnut secondary. HOA 81 3/4", WOA 47 3/8", DOA 25 3/8". CWF acc. 1977-228, photograph by Hans Lorenz.

and carriages. As he advertised, "The whole of this Work has been made by the first rate Northern Workmen, who are entirely devoted to the finishing of work of the best kind."¹²⁰ Northern architects also migrated south. Alexander Paris served as architect for the Governor's Mansion and created initial designs for the Wickham House (now the Valentine Museum) in Richmond; he also produced designs for the Bollingbrook Hotel in Petersburg.¹²¹

The arrival of highly skilled artisans who were able to produce sophisticated northern forms presented considerable competition to Petersburg's established tradespeople. Suggestive of these trends were the cabinet warerooms advertised by five local furniture-makers. Such establishments offered imports alongside their own manufactures. According to Forsyth Alexander, the move from cabinetmaking to vending imported products was the prevalent trend in many southern furniture-making centers after 1800. Furthermore, she found that warehouses offering northern furniture were most likely to succeed in moderately-sized port towns as opposed to larger cities where some degree of industrial manufacture was the norm.¹²² For their part, Petersburg's new warehousers boldly declared the quantity and quality of their imported furniture. In 1811 George Mason announced that his wareroom had for sale New York fancy and Windsor chairs "superior to any heretofore offered in this place," a rather pointed reference in a town so abundantly occupied by Windsor chairmakers.¹²³ After 1800, Petersburg's furniture-makers generally moved their cabinet shops toward the rear of their lots, while their retail warerooms were established along the street, where prospective clients could readily see the merchandise.

Other new competition for Petersburg's furniture-makers were "auction houses," which processed estate sales and sold large shipments of imported goods. Among the more active auctioneers was William Moore, who in 1817 announced "the most superb assortment of furniture that was ever exhibited in Petersburg." His holdings largely consisted of imported forms. Although Moore immediately added that he was not forsaking wares "of Virginia manufacture, and the pride of Virginia will not be sacrificed," subsequent advertisements suggest the vast majority of his offerings were northern, usually from New York.¹²⁴

Not surprisingly, the number of furniture-makers working in Petersburg declined after 1820, a trend also discernable in nearby Richmond.¹²⁵ Petersburg's traditionally structured furniture shops simply could not compete with the growing presence of imported goods, auction houses, and warehouses. Local furniture-making by no means disappeared completely after 1820, however. In 1825 Samuel Caldwell, whose sporadic furniture-making career in Petersburg began in 1810, announced his "Cabinet Ware-Room" on Bank Street, where he offered "New furniture, elegantly and substantially made." Caldwell emphasized his employment of skilled artisans and his access to fashionable materials, adding that "any article will be made to order at short notice."¹²⁶ In 1826 he joined a number of other cabinetmakers in Petersburg's Benevolent Mechanics Society, an organization that united the town's tradespeople and improved their ability to promote beneficial political and eco-



Figure 74. Pembroke table, by William Badger, c. 1825. Mahogany with poplar and yellow pine secondary. Dimensions not recorded. Private collection, photograph by Hans Lorenz.

nomic policy. By 1860 Petersburg's business directory still listed several cabinetmaking shops.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, after 1820 furniture such as a signed breakfast table (figs. 74 and 74a) made at William H. Badger's Sycamore Street shop, circa 1825, generally became the exception rather than the rule. Such forms were more cheaply imported from cities like New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore for sale through local furniture warerooms and auction houses.

In sum, the period of 1800 to 1820 represents an important transitional period in Petersburg's furniture-making history. The significant expansion of the local furniture community during these years reflected the town's reduced cultural and

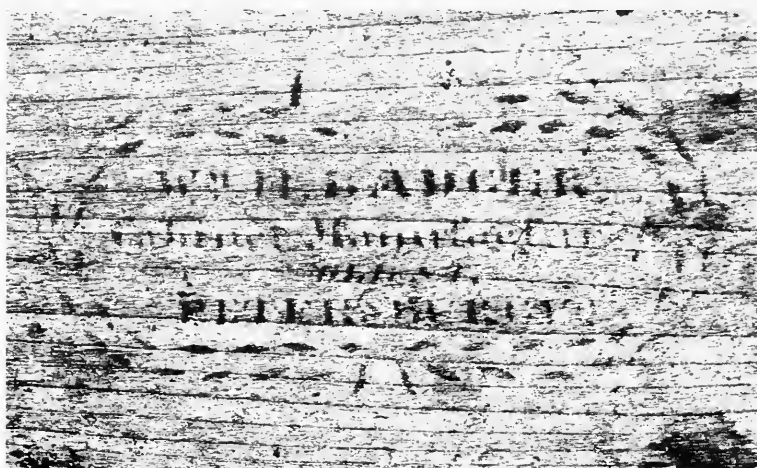


Figure 74a. Detail of table in fig. 74, showing William Badger's black stencilled signature.

economic ties to Great Britain and its increased role as an important market center. Trade diversification, larger and more productive furniture shops, and significant cultural advances made by blacks and women further evidence this growth. By the 1820s, however, Petersburg's changing economy effectively brought to an end the significant regional role played by its furniture-makers. As the town became integrated into America's emerging national economic system, large-scale northern manufactories assumed a leadership role in the provision of furniture. Contributing to this evolution were significant transportation improvements and interstate commercial networks,

which facilitated the movement of goods to towns like Petersburg.

In response to these evolving socioeconomic patterns, some of Petersburg's more successful furniture-makers expanded their operations to include warerooms, where imported goods could be offered side-by-side with their own productions. In general, however, this transition was not financially feasible for the town's artisans, who had neither the capital nor the shop space to pursue such a venture. By 1820 many furniture-makers, even some who were affluent and ran relatively successful businesses, either quit the trade or left town in search of markets where the services of small-scale shops were still needed.

Overall, Petersburg's history contributed to a regional furniture style that originally adhered to mid-eighteenth-century British neat and plain designs and was similar to the furniture made in other nearby Virginia cities. As the town's economic ties to Britain were lessened after the Revolution, Petersburg's emergence as an important marketplace for southside Virginia and northeastern North Carolina allowed the evolution of a style less influenced by international trends and more insular in nature. Most Petersburg furniture made at this time, however, mirrored earlier conservative lines and designs. After 1800, the influence of dominant American furniture centers such as Philadelphia and New York can be seen in a few extant examples attributed to Petersburg, although many cabinetmakers clung to still older traditions. As the nineteenth century progressed, much of the furniture's regional attributes were lost in the homogenizing of America's late neoclassical and early empire styles, and the prominent role assumed by Petersburg artisans during the town's golden age of furniture-making, from 1760 through 1820, was effectively over.

Appendix A.

Petersburg's Furniture-makers.

Editor's note: All the artisans listed below worked in the Petersburg area. The dates beside their names represent those dates for which they are recorded in Petersburg. The information included in these sketches is not endnoted; instead, the sources found for each artisan appear at the end of their biographies. The newspapers and court records named can be found in the MESDA files. Personal property and land tax information was found at the Virginia State Library, where both original and microfilm versions are available.

ARBUTHNOT, Thomas. *Cabinetmaker, Coffinmaker* (1765-1768).

Arbuthnot first appeared in the Petersburg area records in 1765, when he provided the first of three inexpensive coffins for Bristol Parish Church. A 1766 advertisement stated that he was working in the village of Blandford, just outside of Petersburg, and required the services of "ONE or two journeymen CABINETMAKERS, who are sober and industrious, and understand their business well." This suggests that Arbuthnot's business was similar in size to other contemporary urban Virginia cabinetmaking operations. Relatively little is known of Arbuthnot's career in Petersburg. In 1768 he announced his intention to leave the colony, and notified all creditors and debtors to settle their accounts. Whether or not Arbuthnot ever left is unclear. By 1775 he was living in the Hanover County residence of Mr. Robert Patterson, recently deceased. Hanover, an active county seat with a courthouse and an ordinary among its primary features, may well have provided a modest flow of customers for Arbuthnot. Shortly thereafter, Arbuthnot announced a temporary departure from Virginia: "HANOVER TOWN, Dec. 27, 1775. I intend to leave the Colony for a short Time, on a Journey to South Carolina. All persons indebted to me at present are desired to pay the same to Leighton Wood, Jun. whom I have authorized to give sufficient Discharges. Gentlemen and ladies may be supplied with all Sort of Cabinet Work at my Shop in this Town, which will be left under the Direction of Mr. George Brown."

Arbuthnot was back in the Richmond/Hanover area in 1778 when he advertised for the return of a stolen or runaway horse, and offered the impressive sum of £5 for the horse and £10 for information leading to conviction of the thief. Whether Arbuthnot was still producing furniture, however, is not clear (*The Vestry Book and Register of Bristol Parish Virginia*, 1720-1789, 202, 213, 216; *Virginia Gazette*, Purdie, 13 June 1766; *Virginia Gazette*, Purdie & Dixon, 1 Jan. 1767, 27 July 1768; *Virginia Gazette*, Dixon & Hunter, 17 June 1775, 13 Jan. 1776, 13 Nov. 1778).

BADGER, Joseph. *Painter, "Color Shop" Proprietor* (1787-1803).

In 1787 "Jos. Badger" paid taxes on two black servants over the age of sixteen and one under. By 1789 his Petersburg coachmaking shop was in operation. That year, he and Deveraux Jarrat Manly, a coachmaker and wheelwright, were called upon to appraise the estate of Jones Allen Dean. In 1791 Badger placed advertisements in Petersburg and Williamsburg newspapers announcing the opening of a "RETAIL COLOR SHOP . . . at the upper end of Old Street, near the tanyard, where country gentlemen and others, may be furnished with all kinds of paints used in common, either in their natural state, or prepared for the brush." Badger, who simultaneously maintained his "COACH AND SIGN PAINTING" business, also supplied "linseed, and train oil, putty, window glass, and paint brushes," as well as a number of rather specialized services such as custom-made hat cases and umbrella repairing. Certainly, the glazing supplies, paints, and clear finishes available at Badger's shop would have been of use to area cabinetmakers and Windsor chairmakers.

In 1793 Badger, along with a number of others, was fined four hundred pounds of tobacco for failing to appear when called for Grand Jury duty. The assessment speaks strongly of the agrarian orientation of Virginia's economy. In August of that year, Badger took a "Poor Orphan Boy" named George Gilmore as an apprentice. The young man had formerly been apprenticed to Robert Scott, occupation unknown. Badger continued his coachmaking and decorating activities, including the sale of chariots, coaches, phaetons, and double chairs, some of which were imported directly from Philadelphia. By 1794, the partnership of "Badger & Shiphard" was formed and advertised its ability to provide "COACH & SIGN PAINTING" and "Coach Japaning and Gilding." The firm also offered house painting and paper hanging.

A 1796 insurance assessment described Badger's "dwelling" as a two-story wood frame residence with a detached kitchen and the "painter's shop" as a small, single-story, wood-frame work shop. Badger's ownership of these buildings suggests that he was a relatively successful artisan and merchant. Further indicating this was his active participation in the social and political life of the community. For example, in 1796 he was elected to the Common Hall of Petersburg. In that legislative body, he served on a committee assigned to help prevent smallpox, a disease that had ravaged Norfolk the year before, through the promotion of inoculations and the development of hospitals. He was later appointed by the Petersburg Court as one of the "Captains of Patrols in Water Street Ward."

In 1797, Badger entered into a new coachmaking partnership with Joseph Atkins, selling and repairing "Carriages" in the shop formerly occupied by Deveraux J. Manly. This location was the second shop site for the partners; the first, located across from Robert Armistead's tavern, was subsequently rented by William Thompson, a wheelwright from Richmond. Badger alone gave notice in 1799 for the application of three or four apprentices to the "Coachmaking and Smith's business" and stated his preference for "boys of color to the Smith's business." The advertisement reveals that his was a relatively large and diverse shop. He retailed "large glass suitable for pictures, clocks, bookcases, show-boxes, &c;" which he could "cut to any size that may be wanting," a service needed by cabinetmakers and other customers.

In 1801 Badger became involved in yet another coachmaking partnership, called "Badger & Leath." It offered a full range of coachmaking and decorating services. Badger died in 1803, and his obituary described him as "a kind and affectionate husband, a tender father, a good neighbor, and an useful citizen" who left behind "five small children . . . to bewail his loss." His wife Ann was named administratrix of his estate, and she sold off a number of finished and unfinished coaches, as well as some old carriage bodies. Ann stayed on the property and in 1813 an insurance appraisal estimated that the nearly demolished "old Painter's Shop" was not worth \$100 (Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book 1, 1784-1805, 135, 253; Petersburg *Virginia Gazette*, 30 Apr. 1794; *Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer*, 29 Sept. 1791, 26 July 1792, 6 Sept. 1793, 20 May 1794, 9 Feb., 9 Sept. 1796, 12 Sept. 1797, 7 May 1799, 1 Apr. 1800; *Independent Ledger & Petersburg & Blandford Public Advertiser*, 8 May 1793; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1791-97, 81, 85, 98; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 10: 26; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1800-1804, 75; *Petersburg Republican*, 16 Nov. 1804; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 68: 1171; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1794).

BARNES, James (see SEATON, Leonard).

BIRD, Jonathan. *Cabinetmaker* (1802-1804).

Jonathan Bird was taxed by the city of Petersburg in 1802 and 1803 and in 1804 was listed as one of several cabinetmakers who had letters remaining at the Petersburg post office. By August of that year, however, an advertisement in the *Raleigh Register* announced the newly established cabinetmaking firm of "Bird & Reynolds" in Warrenton, North Carolina. Interestingly, in 1803, a cabinetmaker named "Thomas Renald" was recorded as having mail in Petersburg. This almost certainly was a reference to Thomas

Reynolds, Bird's partner, whom he may well have known prior to their joint business venture. Bird and Reynolds advertised their ability to produce "Furniture of the most fashionable kinds," as well as "Furniture of every kind for common use"—a rare reference to the manufacture of utilitarian furniture wares. They also had a "stock of elegant Mahogany, which they will work into Articles suitable for the adornment of genteel Apartments, either plain, inlaid, or ornamented."

By 1807 the partnership had dissolved and Bird relocated to Charleston, South Carolina. Bird's obituary was published in the *Charleston Courier* on 24 September 1807, and read "Died, on Sullivan's Island, Mr. JONATHAN BIRD, Cabinet Maker, aged 30 years, a native of Yorkshire, in England." *The Raleigh Register* also announced his death, noting he was "formerly of Warrenton." His estate inventory included "1 Chest Tools" and an expensive silver watch.

A small neoclassical table stamped "J. Bird" and scratched with the date "1792" has been published, although as John Bivins noted, the crudely incised date is questionable, as is the attribution to Charleston, South Carolina, where the use of cherry as a primary wood was not common (*Petersburg Republican*, 19 July 1803, 6 Oct. 1804; *Raleigh Register*, 6 Aug. 1804, 1 Oct. 1807; *Charleston Courier*, 24 Sept. 1807; George Michael, *George Michael's Treasury of Federal Antiques*, (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1972), 37; John Bivins, *The Furniture of Coastal North Carolina, 1700-1820*, Winston-Salem, N. C.: Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, 1988, 455, 495-96; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1802-1804).

Note - The following three entries examine Alexander, Archer, and Joel Brown, all of whom were Windsor chairmakers and who were apparently related. During the early nineteenth century, the three were involved in a variety of joint, as well as individual, business ventures. If in fact they were related, their selection of this trade was a reasonable one; records indicate that Joel was the son of Samuel Brown, a wheelwright in nearby Chesterfield County. Wheelwrights employed many of the same turning and joining skills used in the production of Windsor seating furniture. Thus Joel's Windsor skills probably were honed at his father's shop. Despite the apparent individual business and social achievements of the three Windsor-chairmaking Browns, particularly Joel and Alexander, between 1815 and 1820 all relocated to other regions. Like so many other Petersburg artisans, they apparently were victims of the town's increasing reliance on the importation of fashionable yet inexpensive furniture from the North.

BROWN, Alexander. *Windsor Chairmaker* (1798-1820).

Alexander Brown of Petersburg, probably a close relative of Windsormakers Joel and Archer Brown, first appeared in the 1798 Petersburg land tax records as the owner of property on Market Street (see BROWN, Archer and BROWN, Joel). The personal property tax lists for 1800 noted that he paid \$40 for an unspecified business license with John Brown, possibly yet another relative. Unfortunately, little is known of Alexander's business activities for the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century. During this time he consistently owned a number of male and female slaves, several horses, and a riding chair, and he served as Mayor of Petersburg in 1808 and 1809. Brown's affluence is further suggested in the highly-detailed 1815 tax lists; he owned a wide variety of mahogany case furniture and "12 bamboo or cane chairs," possibly of his own manufacture.

In October 1816 Brown advertised in the *Richmond Commercial Compiler*: "To Chair Makers: *The Subscriber being about to remove to the Country, Will rent for the ensuing year, And possession given first January, his shop, to which is attached a pleasant lodging room and small kitchen. The rent will be accommodating. He will also furnish timber for 200 chairs complete, at a liberal price; and will rent tools—if required.* ALEXANDER BROWN. N.B. The above is well established as a chairmaker's shop, being the same for many years occupied by Joel Brown in the same business."

Earlier that year, Joel Brown, who for years had operated an extensive "Windsor Chair Manufactory" in Petersburg, moved his business to Raleigh, North Carolina. Although Alexander took over the shop site, it is not clear whether he had any direct business relationship with Joel. Interestingly, that same year, Archer Brown moved his Windsor operation to Lynchburg, Virginia.

By 1817 Alexander Brown had established his own Windsor chairmaking partnership with Graves Matthews, an artisan who had formerly worked in Richmond and was the ex-partner of Petersburg Windsor chairmaker Leonard Seaton (see MATTHEWS, Graves and SEATON, Leonard). That year Matthews and Brown offered a "TEN CENTS REWARD" for a runaway apprentice named James Denoon, who was described as "upwards of 20 years old, five feet three or four inches high, had black hair which curls, blue eyes, and is very much marked in the face by the small pox." Several months later the partners advertised again:

MATTHEWS & BROWN CHAIRMAKERS, SIGN-PAINTERS & TURNERS, RESPECTFULLY inform their customers and the public in general, that they have now on hand and intend to keep, at their Shop on Old street, a few doors above French's Tavern, a general assortment of elegant WINDSOR CHAIRS, Settees, Bedsteads, Cradles, Gigg-Seats, Writing Chairs, and every other article in their line; — which they offer for sale, on the most accommodating terms. PAINTING & GILDING of every description, executed in the neatest manner, on short notice. Orders in either branch of their business, will be thankfully received & punctually attended to.

Their production of a broad range of Windsor furniture forms and their services of turning, painting, and gilding closely paralleled those offered by Joel Brown while he was working in Petersburg, a further suggestion of a business relationship between Joel and Alexander. No further references to the partnership of Matthews and Brown or to Alexander Brown's individual activities are known. By 1818 the cabinetmaking partnership of Lewis Marks, Machie F'Anson, and Ezra Stith advertised their new shop located "a few doors above French's Tavern." Possibly they were in the shop once occupied by Matthews and Brown (see F'ANSON, Machie D.).

Beginning in 1818, Brown paid Robert Bolling, who by this was time the wealthiest landowner in the city, the considerable sum of \$700 for a lot east of Sycamore Street that was adjacent to "Turners Vendue Store." In 1819 Brown was taxed for this property and for his "former mansion" on Market Street, an indication that he was living elsewhere. By 1820 Brown, who then lived in Huntsville, Alabama, was taxed only for the Market Street property which had a total value of \$4,275 (*Petersburg Republican*, 9 June 1806; *Richmond Commercial Compiler*, 23 Dec. 1816; *Petersburg American Star*, 23 June, 7 Aug. 1817; *Intelligencer and Petersburg Commercial Advertiser*, 24 Mar. 1818; *Raleigh Star*, and *North Carolina State Gazette*, 25 June 1819; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1798-1820; Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1798-1820).

BROWN, Archer. *Windsor Chairmaker, Coachmaker* (1803-1807).

Like Joel and Alexander Brown, Archer Brown produced a broad range of Windsor seating furniture in Petersburg during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. He first appeared in the tax records in 1803, and two years later the notice of the dissolution of the "Copartnership" of John N. Smith and Archer Brown announced: "The business will be carried on at the same place by Archer Brown." A week later, an advertisement for their shop on "Sycamore-street and corner of Back-street, Petersburg," appeared in the *Petersburg Republican*: "The Subscriber BEGS leave to inform his friends and the public, that he has now on hand a large and complete assortment of Windsor Chairs and Cribs, and can be supplied on a short notice with Riding Chair bodies, Writing Chairs, Settees, Cradles, &c. which he warrants to be strong and elegantly finished. They are offered for sale on reasonable terms for cash, country or West India produce."

Two years earlier, Joel Brown of Petersburg had combined the trades of Windsor chairmaking and coachmaking, one of many examples of the strong connection in Petersburg between the two trades. By 1806 Archer Brown, like Joel, had a shop on Old Street and was making "Settees, Cribs, Cradles, &c.," as well as "Secretary Chairs," the latter probably a reference to the same type of "Writing Chairs" Joel Brown sold. Today they are often referred to as writing-arm Windsors. In 1806 Joseph Hill, a gardener in Sussex County, announced that trees from his nursery would be sold in Petersburg by "Mr. A. Brown, coachmaker, at the sign of the Eagle, Old street." This combination was one of the more unusual business arrangements involving an early Petersburg furniture-maker.

Tax records indicate that Brown resided in the city until 1807 and that he was by no means affluent. Where Brown went after that year is unclear. In 1812 he offered for sale "his Tract of Land on which he presently resides, containing 180 acres, lying in Dinwiddie county, 16 miles from Petersburg, on Nemozine road." The notice added that the parcel "is a good stand for a tavern, one having been there for many years." It is not known whether Brown, like other local furniture-makers such as Robert McKeen, Thomas Fenner, and Samuel H. Caldwell, had any involvement with tavernkeeping.

By 1816, Archer Brown was in Lynchburg where he advertised his business:

Archer Brown WINDSOR-CHAIR Maker—Sign and Ornamental Painter, &c.—Begg leave to inform the public that he still continues to carry on his usual business of making Chairs, Settees, Cribs and Cradles, and executing Sign and Ornamental Painting in the neatest manner. The materials of which his work is made he warrants to be of the best kind, and all work in the newest and most fashionable Stile. N. B. Those wishing to be supplied with any articles in his line, are solicited to call at his workshop, opposite the Franklin Hotel. Where he has on hand, and will continue to keep a large supply of every article in his line, which will be disposed of on the most accommodating terms.

Later that year he entered into a partnership with John Hockaday, a cabinetmaker and carpenter who formerly had worked in Williamsburg. They signed a ten-year lease for a lot on Second Street, paying \$150 per year for the first five years and \$250 per year for the second five years. Probably there were no buildings on the lot at the time of this contract, which stated "There are no improvements on the lot. . . . Brown and Hockaday may remove any improvements they make at any time during the lease period." No further references to either the partnership or to Archer Brown's furniture-making activities are known (*Petersburg Intelligencer*, 21 Sept. 1804; *Petersburg Republican*, 18, 22 Jan. 1805; *Petersburg Republican*, 9 June 1806, 30 Mar. 1812; Petersburg Order Book No. 5, 1810-1815, 75; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1803-1816; Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1803-1816).

BROWN, Joel. *Windsor Chairmaker, Coachmaker, Housepainter* (1796-1815).

Joel Brown, who was one of Petersburg's most prolific furniture-makers, was one of the few area artisans to leave behind documented examples of his work. A label found on an undated Windsor chair (MESDA Research File S-4611C) reads: "_____ Windsor Chairs MADE AND SOLD BY Joel Brown OLD STREET—Petersburg WITH all kind of Fancy Chairs, Settees and Cribs for Children; riding Chair Bodies in the neatest & newest fashions, Columns turned for Porticos and Porches; Cabinet turning executed in the neatest manner; Orders from the country will be attended to. N. B. A constant supply of Copal and Japan Varnishes."

The Petersburg tax records first listed Joel Brown in 1796. That year Samuel Brown, his father's name, was also taxed in town. Between 1802 and 1804, Joel paid an annual \$15 fee for an unspecified business license. Interestingly, Alexander Brown had purchased licenses from the city in 1800 and 1801 (see BROWN, Alexander). By 1803 Joel Brown had insured his two buildings on Market Street in the High Street Ward; they were a two-story wooden dwelling "underpinned with stones & cellar underneath" and a wooden one-story carriage house.

In 1804 Joel advertised for sale a variety of riding chairs and "15 Dozen WINDSOR CHAIRS, Of different kinds." One year later, he took Wayne Evans, orphan of Henry Evans, as an apprentice "Windsor Chair maker." Brown's advertisement of April 1806 included an illustrated Windsor chair with "J. B." engraved on the seat: "FOR SALE FROM 15 to 20 dozen well finished Windsor Chairs of different kinds, elegant gilt, striped and plain—and are daily finishing Chairs of every description. Riding Chair bodies in the neatest and newest fashions. Settees, Cribs, Cradles, &c. &c. Those wishing to furnish themselves with these articles, will find it well worth their while to apply at the subscriber's shop, on Old-Street, a few doors above the Post-Office—at the sign of the Woman with a Chair in her Hand." The "woman" on Brown's shop sign was identified in a later notice as "Hope," an allegorical image portrayed on a wide variety of American decorative and utilitarian wares during the early national period. Shortly after he placed this advertisement, Brown offered 30 dozen Windsor chairs of different kinds "priced from one to three dollars each," as well as settees, cribs, cradles, and ten "Secretary Chairs."

Tax records from 1800 onward reflect Brown's increasing financial success. In any given year up to 1816, he was annually taxed for as many as four adult white males and four adult black males. Indeed, slaves proved to be a valuable commodity for Brown. In 1807 he sold several servants to pay a deed of trust to Thomas B. Robertson, a Petersburg lawyer and the brother of cabinetmaker William Robertson (see ROBERTSON, William). That year Brown announced his "WINDSOR CHAIR MANUFACTORY" on Old Street, which had on hand "400 *Windsor Chairs* of different kinds, Elegant gilt, striped and plain. He added that "ladies and gentlemen wishing to furnish themselves with chairs, settees, cribs, cradles, &c. will find it worthy of notice call at the shop, as I have the newest and neatest fashions ever offered in Petersburg at reduced prices, for cash or country produce." While Brown's earliest advertisements suggested his primary role as a coachmaker, it is clear that by this period he was primarily focussing on the production of Windsor seating furniture—a theory supported by the diminishing mention of riding chair work and its movement to the bottom of his notices.

Brown's father, Samuel Brown of Exeter Mills in Chesterfield County, died in 1809. Joel and his mother, Elizabeth, oversaw the sale of his father's personal property that included "tools belonging to a wheel-wrights shop." If his father was, in fact, a wheelwright, Joel Brown probably apprenticed with him and learned the same turning and joinery skills used in the production of Windsor seating furniture and riding chairs. While settling his father's estate, Brown continued to expand his Petersburg Windsor chairmaking business. In 1811 he advertised for "THREE APPRENTICES. . . of respectable parentage and good character." He added that the "Boys will also be taught the Art of Painting, Gilding, and Varnish Making," skills utilized in the production of decorated Windsor seating furniture. This notice provides a rare glimpse into the lifestyles of apprentices, noting that each "shall furnish himself with his bed and wearing apparel; his washing, mending, and diet to be furnished him" and that each would "receive 50 dollars when free."

In 1812, at the onset of hostilities between America and England, Brown volunteered for military duty. Prior to leaving Petersburg, Brown placed the following announcement in August 1812: "DURING my absence in the service of my country, I have employed Mr. Elijah Crages, late of Georgetown, District of Columbia, to carry on my Windsor Chair Manufactory. His knowledge in that line, and strict attention thereto, I have no doubt will give full satisfaction to those who favor him with their custom." No further references to Elijah Crages, in Petersburg or elsewhere, are known.

By May 1814, Brown had returned to Petersburg. He offered for sale a carriage and "Ten to Twelve Dozen elegant finished Windsor Chairs," adding that "he continues to manufacture and sell all articles in his profession." Brown then expanded into the "HOUSE PAINTING" business. Under an engraving of a hand and brush, Brown advertised in April 1815 his twenty years of related experience and noted that "A sample of his painting may be seen in the new brick building belonging to Mr. Haffey, at present occupied by Messrs. Redfield & Co as a store." At the same time he noted that he had

"A few dozen WINDSOR CHAIRS on hand and will continue to finish the same as heretofore." That same year, Thomas Cosby moved his "Saddlers' Shop" to Brown's house on Water Street. The 1815 tax records noted that Brown owned a variety of large mahogany case pieces, as well as a silver watch and several oil portraits. In addition to the Water Street property, specifically lot 3, Brown also rented a lot in the Gillfield area of town, although its low rental rate suggests that there were no buildings on site.

Despite his apparent success in Petersburg, by June 1816 Joel Brown had relocated to Raleigh, North Carolina. Six months later Alexander Brown offered Joel's former Old Street shop for rent, noting that it had "attached a pleasant lodging room and a small kitchen." Joel continued to be taxed for the Water Street property through 1818. In December 1816 he announced the arrival of his "Windsor Chair Manufactory, from Petersburg, Va. to the house lately occupied by Thomas Cobbs, on Hillsborough street" in Raleigh. A year earlier Cobbs had purchased the entire Windsor chairmaking stock of George W. Grimes, another former Petersburg Windsormaker who had turned his attention to coach and sign painting (see GRIMES, George W.). Brown noted that he was "preparing and will in a few weeks be able to supply all demands in his line, in the neatest and most fashionable style; Chairs, Settees, &c. with Gold, or ornament them to direction" and that "He will likewise execute Sign Painting and Gilding, in the neatest manner and on the shortest notice." The addition of sign painting to his repertoire probably reflects decorative skills honed both as a coachmaker and Windsor chairmaker. In 1817 Brown took on Ransom P. Parker of Wake County "as apprentice to the Windsor chairmaker's trade."

As he had in Petersburg, Brown apparently prospered in Raleigh. In 1817 he moved the "WINDSOR CHAIR ESTABLISHMENT" to a lot on Market Street "where he [had] erected a very commodious building for the purpose—and having procured the best Workmen from the North, intends carrying on the business very extensively." From this location, Brown announced that he had "on hand, and shortly will have finished in the first stile of elegance, a large quantity of Chairs, Settees, Cribs, and Cradles." Simultaneously, he advertised for sale "that valuable corner lot" he formerly occupied at "MARSHALL'S CORNER" fronting "the building now erecting for a Museum," and added that "Those wishing to purchase an advantageous situation for a Mercantile, or other business, have a chance which they ought not to let pass their notice, as it is not probable they will ever meet with the like opportunity in the City." Raleigh cabinet-maker Alexander Ross moved into part of Brown's new building on Market Street, where he offered to "finish as elegant and fashionable furniture as ever was imported from the north."

Brown offered "A GREAT BARGAIN!" in January 1819, a reference to the sale of his house and shop, buildings "well calculated for a Coach-maker, or any other mechanic." In March he announced that he was "WISHING to remove from this place as soon as he can adjust his unsettled business and accounts," adding that "He also begs leave to inform his friends that he shall continue the Windsor Chair Making, until he can wind up his affairs here—and from the stock of materials he has now on hand, will be able to finish a large quantity, of Chairs in a short time." At the same time, Brown noted a runaway apprentice named Humphrey Ashburn, aged seventeen. By June a "Public sale" of Brown's lots and "dwelling house" was announced, the house well suited for a "commodious boarding house, or Tavern."

Interestingly, Brown continued to produce furniture, offering "from 12 to 15 dozen Windsor Chairs of different pattern—some of which are elegantly gilt and ornamented." In the same newspaper, Brown placed an illustrated announcement depicting two columns with a swag draped between, framing a Windsor chair. He informed the citizens of Raleigh that he would "continue to carry on the above business during his stay in this place" and that he would turn "columns for porticos or porches in the neatest and most approved style. . . . A sample of my work may be seen in Dr. Burges's new porticos, and at my shop at this time." Although he was still in town in August 1819, engaged in a legal squabble with a druggist, no further mention is known of his activities

in Raleigh or elsewhere (Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 29: 2059; *Petersburg Intelligencer*, 15 Sept. 1804, 25 Sept. 1807, 26 Mar. 1811, 28 Aug. 1812; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1805-1808, 2 Dec. 1805; *Petersburg Republican*, 9 June, 20 Oct., 17 Nov. 1806, 2 Apr. 1807, 29 Apr. 1809, 24 Aug. 1812, 20 May 1814, 10, 15 Oct. 1815; *Virginia Apollo*, 30 May 1807; *Petersburg Daily Courier*, 22 June 1815; *Richmond Commercial Compiler*, 23 Dec. 1816; *Raleigh Register*, 29 Dec. 1815, 16 May 1817, 15 Jan. 1819; *Raleigh Star and North-Carolina State Gazette*, 5 July, 15 Nov. 1816, 5, 19 Mar., 25 June, 20 Aug. 1819; Wake County Court Minutes, North Carolina, 20 Nov. 1817; *Raleigh Minerva*, 10 Apr. 1818; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1796-1819; Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1796-1819).

CALDWELL, Samuel R. *Cabinetmaker, Grocer* (1810-post 1820).

In 1810 Samuel R. Caldwell and Samuel H. Wills announced the opening of their cabinetmaking shop: "The Subscribers HAVING lately purchased a large assortment of Elegant Mahogany, think it expedient to inform their friends and the citizens of Petersburg in general, that they will execute all kinds of CABINET WORK with neatness and dispatch, & on the most moderate terms. Orders from the country duly attended to, and furniture packed up in the best manner by CALDWELL & WILLS."

Two years later William Gunn, an eleven-year-old orphan, was apprenticed specifically to Caldwell to learn the trade of cabinetmaking. By 1815 the partnership of "Caldwell & Wills" was dissolved. Shortly thereafter, Caldwell announced the removal of his "Cabinet Making Shop" to the High Street house formerly occupied by coachmaker James Atkins and adjacent to the "coach Making Business" of John W. Ellis and Herbert B. Elder. In an odd sequence of events, Caldwell ran into legal problems with the property in 1816, and its pending sale was announced to satisfy debts he owed to John Baird. Caldwell publicly cautioned against purchasing the land or the building at auction, promising he would satisfy his debts, but the sale apparently still took place.

Between 1814 and 1816, Caldwell became involved in business activities other than cabinetmaking. For example, in December 1816 he announced the dissolution of his partnership in the "Grocery Business" with Henry D. Pegram and assumed management of the operation, located at the junction of Cross and Old streets. His solo venture did not fare well, and in 1817 a public sale of "all his stock and trade, consisting of a great variety of Groceries, Dry Goods, &c. &c." was announced.

Despite these setbacks, Caldwell was one of the few cabinetmakers in this study who continued to produce furniture in Petersburg after 1820, by which time the importation of northern manufactures had forced other artisans to quit or leave town. In 1825 he announced the removal of his "Cabinet Ware-Room" to a large building "lower down Bank Street, a few doors above the corner of Sycamore, lately occupied by Mr. Rambaut's exchange." There he offered "New furniture, elegantly and substantially made," employed good workmen and materials, and declared that "any article will be made to order at short notice." In 1826 Caldwell joined the newly formed Benevolent Mechanics Association of Petersburg, a trade group organized in response to the town's increasing reliance on imported wares (*Petersburg Republican*, 9 Apr. 1810, 20 May 1814, 3 Oct. 1815, 20 Dec. 1816, 21, 24 Jan. 1817, 18 July 1817; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1812-1816, 3 Aug. 1813; *Intelligencer and Petersburg Commercial Advertiser*, 25 Nov. 1825; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1814-1820).

CLARKE, John. *Cabinetmaker?* (dates unknown).

The only reference to Clarke is an inscription found on a mahogany sideboard with a secretary drawer (now privately owned by a Petersburg area resident). The scripted signature is scratched onto the underside of a small drawer in the desk section, and reads: "John Clarke . . . his drawer, made and sold by him at his shop in Old Street . . . Petersburg, Virginia." While not directly related to any other known Petersburg forms, the sideboard does reflect the type of neat and plain design retained by many Petersburg makers after the Revolution. Interestingly, the construction of the secretary section

suggests an advanced level of cabinetmaking with well-executed joinery and structural techniques. However, the rest of the case is by a less-skilled hand, possibly indicating that the secretary drawers and the case were made by different artisans.

Whether or not Clarke was a full-time cabinetmaker is not clear, and no advertisements by him are known. In his study *The Furniture of Williamsburg and Eastern Virginia, 1710-1790*, Wallace Gusler noted that in Richmond in 1776, a John "Clark" advertised an extensive cabinetmaking operation that included a complete shop description. Between 1803 and 1820, a number of residents named "John Clark" or "Clarke" appeared in the Petersburg tax list. Because of the relatively common name, it is not possible to identify any of these people as the signer of the desk (Wallace Gusler, *The Furniture of Williamsburg and Eastern Virginia, 1710-1790*, Richmond, Va.: Virginia Museum, 1979, 164; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1802-1818).

CRAGES (CRAGER), Elijah. *Windsor Chairmaker* (1812).

Prior to leaving the city to fight in the War of 1812, Petersburg Windsor chairmaker Joel Brown placed the following newspaper advertisement: "NOTICE During my absence in the service of my country, I have employed Mr. Elijah Crages, late of Georgetown, District of Columbia, to carry on my Windsor Chair Manufactory. His knowledge in that line, and strict attention thereto, I have no doubt will give full satisfaction to those who favor him with their custom." One of the later manifestations of this advertisement noted the name as "Crager." Brown returned to his business by early 1814, and no other references to Crages, either in Petersburg or elsewhere, are known (see BROWN, Joel. *Petersburg Republican*, 28 Aug. 1812, 20 May 1814).

DEJERNATT (DEGARNET, DEGARNETT), John. *Cabinetmaker* (1807-post 1820).

John DeJernatt's Old Street cabinetmaking shop was well established by 1806 when he thanked the public "for the encouragement he has received in the line of his profession," and informed them that he was "now so situated as to be enabled to carry on the cabinet making business in the most extensive manner . . . He has the best workmen and materials that can be procured, and will execute orders to any amount, at the shortest notice." Curiously, DeJernatt did not appear in area records again until 1813 when he insured "three buildings on the South side of Old Street in the Town of Petersburg," located on lot 30. The buildings were described as a two-story wooden "dwelling house" with adjoining sheds on either side, a large "cabinet shop and lumber house" with a stone first floor and a wood-framed second floor, and a wood-framed "Cabinet Ware room"—a considerable amount of personal property for a Petersburg furniture-maker at that time.

Over the next five years, DeJernatt became involved in a variety of business ventures in addition to cabinetmaking. In 1815, for example, he insured two adjoining brick buildings situated on lot 7, on the north side of Old Street, one identified as "JnO. Pollard's dwelling and sadler's shop," and the other as a dwelling house and "currying shop" occupied by DeJernatt and "Brewer & Co." Interestingly, each building was insured for the substantial sum of \$4,000, and no mention was made of any cabinet business being conducted on the site. Later that year DeJernatt "resumed the business of a Cabinet Maker in the new Brick House on Old Street, fronting Petersburg warehouse," on part of lot 7. From this new location he announced for sale "the most fashionable and useful articles in the cabinet line." In 1815 DeJernatt not only paid \$120 rent for his "mansion" on lot 30 on Water Street, but also another \$20 in rent to William Boswell for the portion of lot 7 on Water Street. After 1816, however, he was not taxed for lot 30, an indication that he no longer owned the property and had moved both his residence and business to Water Street. DeJernatt was assessed \$1,000 for his portion of lot 7, an increase apparently incurred by the new three-story brick building. A survey of DeJernatt's tax records up to this time clearly indicates his progressive economic success. In 1815, for example, he had six black members in his household, possibly shop employees, and owned a riding chair, a gold watch, a wide variety of mahogany case furniture, and "gilt framed pictures."

By 1815 DeJernatt also operated a "Cabinet Maker's Shop" in Richmond, near James Taylor's "Cabinet Shop and ware room," one of the few examples of a branch cabinetmaking operation in the Petersburg area. One year later, DeJernatt apparently traded his part of lot 7 in return for Taylor's Richmond dwelling house and cabinet shop. (Tax records indicate that by 1817 Taylor was occupying his new portion of the brick building on lot 7, property later offered at a "public vendue" in 1818 to satisfy debts Taylor owed to "Pulliam & Swann." By 1819, Samuel Swann was recorded as renting this portion of lot 7. Swann probably was the son of the wealthy, Richmond-based cabinetmaker who in 1796 was involved in another of Petersburg's branch cabinetmaking firms, called "Swann & Ellis" - see ELLIS). By 1816, DeJernatt's portion of lot 7 in Petersburg included a "kitchen & lumber house" as well as a "plater's shop." It was adjacent to the "Cabinet Makers Shop & Ware Room" that John Raymond and John Ventus rented from Betsey Allegrue (see VENTUS, John and RAYMOND, John). That year, DeJernatt gave notice of a runaway apprentice, an eighteen-year-old named Edward Major.

The increased specialization of Petersburg's furniture trades in the early nineteenth century is reflected by DeJernatt's renting space to an upholsterer, William Neal, in 1816. Neal, a British citizen who had formerly worked in Boston, Baltimore, and Richmond, advertised his ability to upholster sofas, settees, and chairs, and to provide "Draperys & Drawing-room CURTAINS AND CARPETS," as well as "paper-hanging" (see NEAL, William). During this period however, Petersburg furniture-makers began to experience a considerable amount of competition from the importation of northern wares. That year, DeJernatt placed another advertisement clearly indicating the mounting concern southern cabinetmakers had regarding the arrival of competitively priced northern furniture:

THE subscriber, living at rather a remote part of the town, deems it necessary to inform the public, that he has now on hand, a large and elegant assortment of the most fashionable & useful CABINET FURNITURE. He solicits those disposed to give the best prices for the best work, to call and see his, before they apply to another market. As there are already specimens of northern furniture in this place, he has not the least doubt that his will merit a preference. Could the subscriber meet with sufficient encouragement, it would enable him to advance our own market, by giving the most approved workmen such prices as are given in New York and Philadelphia for the best work, having on hand, a large supply of excellent material to insure superior work, which cannot be expected without.

In 1818 DeJernatt insured his "Dwelling & Cabinet Makers Shop" on the corner of Thirteenth and F streets in Richmond for \$3,300. A notice he placed that year illustrates some of the specialty wood products imported by Virginia cabinetmakers during this period. He received "45,000 feet of the best quality island and bay MAHOGANY." This wood was initially prepared for shipment to the "British market" and was "consequently large, as none over 17 inches is allowed to American bottoms," apparently an indication that higher quality wood was reserved for shipment to Great Britain. DeJernatt's new stock included "a large proportion of crotch and shaded wood; bed-posts turned and in the rough; about 5000 feet . . . cut for the use of builders, for stairways, inside doors, sashes, &c."

In the face of Petersburg's growing reliance on the importation of northern manufactures after 1815, DeJernatt's shop, like many other local businesses, encountered significant financial and legal difficulties. In 1819 DeJernatt offered for sale his entire stock of furniture, described as "perhaps the most extensive in the state, amounting to upwards of \$5000—and for elegance, taste, and quality, not surpassed any where." Among the forms for sale were "side boards, with and without china presses, secretaries and book cases, bureaus, patent bedsteads, liquor cases, wash stands, dining tables, tea tables, card tables, cradles, candle stands, chairs, sofas, settees, work stands, writing desks &c. embracing a great variety of patterns, of the latest and most approved."

In 1822 he reinsured his property on lot 7. However, by 1824 he was so deeply in debt to a number of creditors that an indenture relinquishing all of his personal property was entered into the Petersburg Hustings Court records. Listed as the possessions of "John and Christopher DeJernatt, cabinetmakers," the property included the estate of their deceased father, Christopher DeJernatt of Rowan County, North Carolina, as well as all of his "personal estate." Curiously, no other references to a partnership between John and Christopher, Jr., are known. (The latter did not appear in the pre-1820 tax lists). The complete description of the contents of John DeJernatt's shop in this document reveals that he owned an impressive array of household accessories.

DeJernatt remained in the city at least until 1827, when he sold off the remainder of lot 7 and moved to Manchester, just south of Richmond. His business ventures in that town are not known. Interestingly, the reconstructed rostrum of Blandford Church, built in the early twentieth century, was made by John DeJernatt, almost certainly a descendant of the early furniture-maker (*Petersburg Republican*, 23 Apr. 1807, 3 Oct. 1815; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 52: 485, 53: 573, 68: 1216, 73: 2456; Petersburg Hustings Deeds, No. 10, 1815-1816, 612-14; No. 11, 21-24; *Petersburg Republican*, 22 Nov. 1816, 14 Aug. 1817, 6 Mar., 8 May 1818, 15 June 1819; *Petersburg Mercantile Advertiser*, 17 Feb. 1817; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1807-1820. Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1808-1820).

DILLWORTH, George. *Windsor Chairmaking Partner, Wheat Fan Maker, Wire Worker* (1806-1818).

In 1806 George Dillworth and John Priest announced their intent to "carry on the following business, near *Rambaut, Gernon, & Co's* Store, on Old street,—viz. Wheat Fan making. Wire-work, of all kinds, Windsor Chairs, Settees, Riding Chair Bodies, &c. &c.—They likewise make Japan and Copal Varnish." However, their ambitious undertaking was short-lived, and by 1808, Priest was in Nashville, Tennessee, operating a "Windsor Chair Manufactory" (see PRIEST, John).

Dillworth remained in Petersburg, but no further references to his involvement with Windsor chairmaking are known, strongly suggesting that the unsuccessful firm of Dillworth and Priest represented the union of artisans who practiced two distinct trades. Apparently Priest made the furniture, a theory supported by his continuation in that line of work, while Dillworth produced the wheat fans and wire work. By 1812 Dillworth operated a shop opposite the Petersburg Mills where he offered "WHEAT FANS of every description." Five years later, George "Dilworth" advertised that he "intends continuing the WHEAT FAN MAKING and WIRE WEAVING Business at his old stand on Old street, nearly opposite the store of G. & P.H. Wills. . . . Gentlemen who want wire for Rolling Screens, shall have them completed at a short notice." Dillworth also wholesaled fans to other merchants and artisans. For example, cabinetmaker Roger Mallory advertised that he had "for sale, and will keep a constant supply of WHEAT FANS, made by Mr. Geo. Dillworth, who is well known in this place as a master workman" (see MALLORY, Roger). By 1817, Dillworth was producing "wheat fans and wove wire" for retail merchant J. L. Clapdore, who noted that the products were "well known, and approved of in this place."

Although Dillworth had a long career, he was in poor financial standing by 1818 when his son Janius was apprenticed to a local carpenter, Charles C. Birch, by the Overseers of the Poor. Petersburg tax records similarly indicate that Dillworth was never a prosperous artisan. Interestingly, during George Dillworth's tenure in Petersburg, his brother Samuel was working in the city as a printer, bookbinder, and stationer. Samuel lost the shop he shared with M. W. Dunnivant in the massive 1815 Petersburg fire (*Petersburg Intelligencer*, 11 July 1806; *Petersburg Republican*, 27 Feb., 7 May 1812, 7 Feb., 1, 4 July 1817; *Petersburg Daily Courier*, 22 June 1815; *Norfolk Gazette & Public Ledger*, 25 July 1815; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1816-1819, 20 Aug. 1818; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1806-1820).

ELLIS, ? *Cabinetmaker* (1795-1797).

In 1795, Ellis—whose first name remains a mystery, although he may have been John W. Ellis, a longtime Petersburg coach and riding chair maker—entered into a Petersburg cabinetmaking partnership with Samuel Swann of Richmond. Swann, apparently the controlling partner, remained in Richmond, while Ellis managed the Bollingbrook Street shop. Swann simultaneously oversaw yet another cabinetmaking shop in Richmond, which was managed by his son-in-law, George Taylor. Unfortunately, little is known about Ellis's specific role in the Petersburg shop. Indeed, an understanding of his cabinetmaking career is best achieved by examining Swann's.

In 1791 Samuel Swann announced a "CABINET and CHAIR MAKING BUSINESS, at his shop on the cross street leading to Shockoe-Hill." He also offered "FUNERALS furnished on the shortest notice." His apparently was a considerable operation. In 1792, for example, Swann advertised that he had "some of the best workmen employed in his service," as well as "All kinds of CURTAINS made with the utmost expedition." He was involved in a variety of business ventures as well. In 1793, for example, he and his wife Elizabeth purchased additional property in Richmond. Along with his brother John, Swann owned interest in the "black hearth Coal pits situated in the County of Chesterfield." They sold the coal by the bushel, advertising as far away as Knoxville (by 1794 John had assumed sole ownership of the operation).

In 1796 Swann announced that he intended to leave Richmond for a few months. In his absence, George Taylor was charged with running the Richmond cabinetmaking shop, a large operation situated in a "three story extended brick and wood building." The notice also explained that "Mr. Ellis" would manage the Petersburg cabinetmaking shop, a firm that had first advertised in October 1795:

SWAN & ELLIS RESPECTFULLY inform the public that they have just opened shop on Bollingbrook Street nearly opposite the Post-Office, where they intend making all kinds of Cabinet work: such as Easy Chairs, Chairs, Sofas, Secretary and Bookcases, Desk and Bookcases, circular, square, and oval pembroke, Card and Dining Tables, circular and commode sideboards with celarates, circular, square and commode Beaurous, and many other articles too tedious to mention; which they warrant, shall be made as elegant and on as cheap terms as can be imported from any foreign market.

In October 1796 the partners advertised for "Three or Four JOURNEYMEN that is well accomplished in the Cabinet Business," an indication that they ran a relatively large operation. Located "nearly opposite Cedar-Point Warehouse," the shop site was offered for sale in April 1797, though it is unclear whether the business ever moved. Later that year, Swann and Ellis reiterated to the public that they had "in their employ a professen [professed] UPHOLSTERER—which will enable them in the future to execute all orders in that line with neatness and dispatch." In 1797, the only year the firm was recorded in the Petersburg tax books, the partnership was assessed for five adult white males, and three adult black males.

Swann's business interests in Richmond continued during this period. In 1797 the Windsor chairmaking partnership of Pointer and Childress commenced business on Shockoe Hill in the lower part of the building Swann owned. He died in Powhatan County in 1799, leaving behind, among other things, a large amount of "Curtain Callico . . . hanging paper, . . . bordering (ditto)," as well as other bed furniture. In his will, dated 11 October 1795, he bequeathed the entire Richmond cabinetmaking operation, including its apprentices, to Taylor. However, no references to either Ellis or the Petersburg operation were recorded, suggesting that by this time, the shop was no longer in operation. Furthermore, no additional Petersburg references to a cabinet-maker named Ellis are known (Common Council Records, No. 1, 1782-1793, City of Richmond, 1788, 411; *Richmond Virginia Gazette and Public Advertiser* 18 June 1791, 5 Jan. 1793; *Richmond Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser Extraordinary*, 26 Mar. 1794; *Richmond Virginia Gazette & Manchester Advertiser*, 5 Mar. 1795; *Will Book No. 2*, 1787-1802, Henrico County, 490-91, 627; *Petersburg Virginia Gazette*, 3 Nov. 1795; *Deed Book No. 5*, 1796-1800, Henrico Co., 87-90; *Mutual*

Assurance Society of Virginia, 12: 33; Richmond *Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser*, 1 June 1796, 11 Jan. 1797, 11 Oct. 1799; *Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer*, 21 Oct. 1796, 21 Apr., 13 Oct. 1797; Will Book No. 5, 1816-1822, Henrico County, 350; Petersburg City Personal Property Tax Lists, 1797).

FAUX, Joseph. (See POWELL, Richard).

FENNER, Thomas and Henry Leiper. *Cabinetmakers* (1795-1805).

In 1795 Thomas Fenner of Petersburg was taxed for one adult white male. The next known reference to him was an 1802 dissolution notice of his partnership with Henry Leiper, who apparently was from Philadelphia and appeared in that city's directory in 1798. Leiper first appeared in the Petersburg tax lists in 1801. Fenner and Leiper's announcement added that they had on hand "some ready made furniture, which will be sold uncommonly low for cash." Shortly before this notice was published, Fenner advertised the sale of "A good Feather Bed, a Milch Cow, a Chest of Drawers, and a Dining Table," suggesting his intent to leave Petersburg. After 1802 he did not appear in the city tax records. Interestingly, it appears that after leaving Petersburg, Fenner embarked on a different career altogether. In January 1811 "Thomas Fenner," most likely the same person, was recorded in the Greenville County records, renewing his licence to keep an ordinary.

Leiper may well have carried on the Petersburg cabinetmaking operation. He remained in the city tax lists through 1805 when he was assessed for two adult white males. In September of that year Leiper announced his intention to leave the state, offering to sell "all his Mahogany Furniture on hand, some feather beds, also a parcel of Mahogany Boards, Work Benches, &c. &c." Articles not sold by private sale were to be auctioned off at the end of the month at his house, "opposite Mr. Durell's Tavern." No further references to his activities in Petersburg are known; however, a Henry Lipper, cabinetmaker, died intestate in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1808. His estate was valued at \$63.25 (*Republican & Petersburg Advertiser*, 21 Dec. 1802; Cornelius Stafford, *Philadelphia Directory*, 1798; *Petersburg Republican*, 30 Dec. 1802, 3-3; *Petersburg Republican*, 27 Sept. 1805; Petersburg Order Book No. 5, 1810-1815, 75; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1795-1805; Charleston County, S. C., Letters of Administration, Vol. SS, 425; Charleston County Inventories, Vol. D, 1800-1810, 469).

FORE, William. *Cabinetmaker* (1801-1807).

William Fore first appeared in the Petersburg tax records in 1801. His assessment of 56¢ for a black adult male and a horse suggests that he did not possess much taxable personal property at the time. In November 1806 Fore and William Robertson, from Scotland, announced the opening of their extensive cabinetmaking operation: "FORE & ROBERTSON, BEG leave to inform their friends, the public in general, that they have commenced the Cabinet Business. At the lower end of Bollingbrook street, opposite Doctor Bott's, where they have on hand a large and general assortment of Furniture, of the newest fashions; consisting of side-boards and bureaus, card, dining, and pembroke tables, secretaries and book cases, candle and wash stands, &c. &c. All of which will be sold at the most reduced prices for Cash." Like so many other Petersburg furniture-making partnerships, theirs was short-lived; it was dissolved in February 1807. Robertson was authorized "to receive payments and grant discharges" and to carry on the "cabinet business in all its various branches, in the house lately occupied by Fore & Robertson" (see ROBERTSON, William).

Fore was taxed in Petersburg through 1804. The next year, however, he was assessed in the "Prince George" section of the Petersburg Tax Books, an indication that he was living in the Blandford area. He continued to be taxed there for one adult white male until 1809, when he reappeared in town records. Between 1810 and 1812, Fore was again listed in Blandford. His cumulative tax records indicate that he never attained much wealth. Furthermore, his involvement in furniture-making after the dissolution of Fore and Robertson is not documented, suggesting that he may have turned to

another trade or business venture (*Richmond and Manchester Advertiser*, 31 Aug. 1796; *Petersburg Republican*, 17 Nov. 1806, 5 Feb. 1807; *Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book*, 1805-1808, 3 Mar. 1806; *Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books*, 1801-1812).

GRIMES, George W. *Windsor Chairmaker, Coach and Sign Painter* (1812-1814).

In 1800 "George W. Grymes" was apprenticed to Ephraim Evans, a Windsor chairmaker in Alexandria, Virginia. By 1812, Grimes was in Petersburg where he joined the local Volunteers to fight the British. In 1814 he returned from military duty and announced the opening of his new business, located nearly opposite the Farmer's Bank on Bollingbrook Street. Although a "Coach & Sign Painter," Grimes stated that he intended to keep "constantly on hand, a handsome assortment of Fancy and Windsor CHAIRS." He also sold prints and executed "MILITARY COLORS AND GILDING" ("military colors" apparently referred to the decoration of painted flags). Like many other early nineteenth-century Petersburg artisans who were not able to compete with the increasing importation of northern wares, Grimes left town. He settled in Raleigh, North Carolina, where he advertised in 1815:

WINDSOR CHAIRS.- George W. Grimes respectfully informs the citizens of Raleigh, that he has taken the house on Hillsborough street, opposite to Mr. Wm Boylan's, where he intends carrying on the Windsor Chair making, in all its various branches. He will also, carry on the Sign and Military Color painting, in the neatest and most elegant manner. The Chairs will be made to any fashion, and finished in a style of elegance interior to none in the Union. Orders from the country will be thankfully received and dispatched with celerity. Raleigh, June 2, 1815. An apprentice to the above business, of good family and about 14 or 15 years of age will be taken.

However, Grimes had a short-lived Windsor chairmaking career. In December 1815 a coachmaker named Thomas Cobbs announced that he had "purchased the entire stock of Windsor Chair materials of George W. Grimes, and intends on carrying on the Windsor Chair making business extensively." Cobbs added that he would simultaneously continue his "Coach making business" as well. (By 1816, Joel Brown, another transplanted Petersburg Windsor chairmaker, was operating a "Windsor Chair Manufactory" out of the Raleigh house formerly occupied by Cobbs. See BROWN, Joel).

After the sale of the Windsor operation, Grimes placed an advertisement relating to his newest business venture. In April 1816 he announced that "GEORGE W. GRIMES, having sold to Mr. Thomas Cobbs, his stock in the Windsor Chair business, intends devoting his attention exclusively to PAINTING AND GILDING" and that "He will attend particularly to the Coach and Sign Painting, and House ornamenting." Although Grimes emphasized his "assiduity" and "attention to business," another advertisement in the same newspaper began "Look here, THE citizens of Raleigh and its vicinity, will be cautious of George W. Grimes, who for some time has resided in this city;" the complaint went on to describe Grimes's delinquent payment for the purchase of some beef.

By May 1816, Grimes was in a "house lately occupied by Mr. Joel Lane," where he offered a variety of goods for area artisans, including "A QUANTITY of the best Japan Varnish, for Coach and Sign Painting, &c." On 11 June 1816, a "DISTRESSING FIRE AT RALEIGH, (N. C.)," was described in the *American Beacon and Commercial Diary*, a Norfolk, Virginia, newspaper. Apparently, an "incendiary" set fire to a store-house on Fayetteville Street, a blaze that soon spread to other buildings. Among the houses destroyed was a "store-house" owned by a Mr. Brickle at that time "occupied by Mr. G. W. Grimes, Painter." It is not clear whether Grimes recovered from this event, as no further references to his activities are known (*Petersburg Intelligencer*, 8 July 1814; *Raleigh Minerva*, 23 June, 22 Dec. 1815; *Raleigh Star*, and *North-Carolina State Gazette*, 12, 26 Apr., 17 May 1816; *Norfolk American Beacon and Commercial Diary*, 20 June 1816).

F'ANSON, Machie D., Lewis L. Marks, Ezra Stith. *Cabinetmakers* (1811-1818).

In August 1815 Machie D. F'Anson, Lewis L. Marks, and Ezra Stith advertised the opening of their "Cabinet Making Business" located in a house at the "lower end of Bollingbrook Street, next door above Mr. JOHNSTON'S Stemmyery," a tobacco processing warehouse. The partners informed the public that they would carry on "the above business, in all its several branches." Little is known of their individual activities in Petersburg prior to this venture. Stith was the first to appear in the town's records, taxed in the Prince George or Blandford section of the city in 1811. F'Anson was taxed in Petersburg in 1815, and Marks in 1819, when he was noted as living in Ward "W."

By 1816, the partners had moved their shop to a lot owned by Robert Bolling and located on the north side of "Bolling Brook Street." An insurance appraisal stated that the three tradesmen occupied the only building on the site, a "Cabinet makers Shop" described as a 40-by-20-foot, one-story, wood-frame building and appraised at \$400. By 1818, the three artisans again moved their "Cabinet Business," this time to a site "a few doors above French's Tavern" on Old Street, possibly into the shop previously occupied by the Windsor chairmaking partnership of Alexander Brown and Graves Matthews (see BROWN, Alexander and MATTHEWS, Graves). The trio's sole newspaper advertisement from this location noted that they "have recently purchased a parcel of the best St. Domingo Mahogany—and intend to manufacture and keep on hand a good assortment of Cabinet Furniture, which they will dispose of on the most reasonable and satisfactory terms; their friends and others are invited to call."

While it is known that F'Anson remained an active member in Blandford's Masonic Lodge No. 3 into the 1820s, no further furniture-making references to any of the three artisans have been found. However, in 1817 Moses Mordecai of Raleigh wrote his brother, who lived in Richmond, requesting that some of his bedroom furniture be "of Painted Wood such as I saw at Mr. Marx," perhaps a reference to Lewis Marks (*Petersburg Intelligencer*, 22 Sept. 1815; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, Vol. 53: 538; *Intelligencer & Petersburg Commercial Advertiser*, 24 Mar. 1818; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1811-1819; Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1811; Kenneth Joel Zogry, "Plain and Handsome: Documented Furnishings at the Mordecai House, 1780-1820," *JESDA* 15: 96).

LAYSSARD (LAYSSART, LEYSARD, LAYSART), Lewis. *Cabinetmaker, Looking-Glass Maker, Blacksmith* (1814-1819).

Aside from his dubious distinction of being the Petersburg furniture-maker whose name was most frequently misspelled, Lewis Layssard was one of the more diversely skilled artisans in this study. Beginning in 1814, he embarked on a wide variety of trades and business ventures that took him from Virginia to North Carolina. In December of that year, Layssard and his partner John Lorrain announced the opening of their shop "in a house on High-Street, nearly opposite to Mr. Bowden's" where they offered a variety of services that included the making and repairing of "LOOKING-GLASSES of all descriptions, sizes and qualities." The advertisement further noted that "They will hereafter keep constantly on hand, a good assortment of Dressing-glasses, in stained mahogany and gilt frames." Like so many other Petersburg partnerships, theirs was short-lived. Lorrain went on to work in Petersburg as a portraitist and floorcloth painter (see LORRAIN, John).

By February 1815, "Layssart" announced that he had just received for sale a "Piano-forte"; whether this represented a usual business venture for him is not clear. Four months later, "Laysart" apparently changed occupations and was "carrying on in all its various Branches, the BLACK-SMITH'S BUSINESS," as well as "Horse-Shoeing and all kinds of Farm work—Waggon—Dray and Cart-Ironing" and "HORSEFARRING, &C." By December 1817, Lewis "Leysard" and his wife Elizabeth had moved to Louisiana, North Carolina, where he commenced a "CABINET AND CHAIR MAKING BUSINESS." In this capacity Layssard had "on hand and excellent assortment of Mahogany, & engaged hands from Petersburg and New York," vowing that he could "supply his friends with all kinds of furniture, as good as any of the Northern Towns, and on

reasonable terms." Curiously, a Lewis Layssard was listed in the 1819 Petersburg City Personal property tax records as living in Ward "C," and he was taxed for one adult white male. It is possible that Layssard briefly returned to town or that this was his son or some other relative.

John Bivins's research on Layssard further noted his status as a jack-of-all-trades. By 1825, Layssard had again relocated, this time to Halifax, North Carolina, where he "invented a new and useful Machine for the purpose of Packing Cotton into square bales." Just one year later, he moved further south to Tarboro, North Carolina, where he returned to cabinetmaking. There Layssard "erected a complete workshop" that was producing "Sideboards, China Presses, secretaries, bookcases, bureaux, tables, wash-stands, candle-stands, gentlemen's and ladies wardrobes, ladies' and gentlemen's cabinets, cylinder-fall desks, portable and common do. and bedsteads of all descriptions." His prolific services also included the "turning business," in "wood, iron, brass, ivory, &c.," and providing carpenters with "columns, newel posts, ballosters, drops, corner blocks, rosettes, &c." In spite of these vast offerings, Layssard's business encountered financial difficulties. He was soon in debt and was forced to sell off two lots in the town of Halifax, as well as "one turning lathe, turning tools & apparatus & cabinetmakers work benches, 2 grindstones with their fixtures, all working tools, stock of timber of all sorts 2 horses 2 gigs double & single 1 set gig hamers, saddle & bridle all the household & kitchen furniture work on hand finished and unfinished 1 cow & 2 calves together with all his property"—in other words, almost everything he owned.

Layssard's wife Elizabeth died some time before January 1831 when her estate was appraised. Later that year Layssard advertised for two or three negro apprentices to the "carpenters trade" and several months later, the estate of James Haliday owed him \$35 for making a coffin. Layssard apparently remained solvent for at least the next several years, as he was noted as purchasing goods at a number of Halifax County estate sales; however, no references to any further trade activity are known (Bivins, *FCNC*, 480; *Petersburg Intelligencer*, 23 Dec. 1814; *Petersburg Daily Courier*, 4 Feb., 22 June 1815; *Petersburg Republican*, 5 Oct. 1815; Norfolk City Deed Book 13, 1815-1817, 500; Raleigh *Star and North Carolina State Gazette*, 26 Dec. 1817; *Warrenton Reporter*, 7 Oct. 1825; *Tarboro Free Press*, 28 Nov. 1826; Halifax County, N. C., Record of Deeds, Book 27, 8 Feb. 1827; Halifax Record of Estates, 1828-1835, 151, 248, 251, 262, 280, 388; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1819).

LEIPER, Henry (see FENNER, Thomas).

LORRAIN, John R. *Looking-Glass Maker, Portraitist, Floor Cloth Painter* (1814-1819).

In December 1814 John Lorrain and Lewis Layssard opened a shop on High Street in Petersburg, where they made and repaired looking glasses (see LAYSSARD, Lewis). Although the partnership did not last long, both artisans remained in the city and became involved in new careers. Within a year Layssard was working as a blacksmith, and by September 1816, Lorrain was advertising his services as a professional portraitist: "J. R. Lorrain, Portrait Painter INFORMS the Ladies and Gentlemen of Petersburg, that he has taken a room in Mr. John Baird's house situated between Bank and Old Streets and immediately behind Sycamore where he will attend to his profession. Those who wish to have their portraits painted are requested to come in the forenoon—visitors are invited to call in the afternoon."

In November 1816 Lorrain offered his painting services to the citizens of Raleigh, North Carolina, who were invited to "inspect Specimens of his Art" at the Raleigh library. Apparently this was a temporary business visit because Lorrain returned to Petersburg a short time later. In August 1817 he announced that he was living on the outskirts of Petersburg where he offered an expanded repertoire of painting services, including "PORTRAIT PAINTING . . . MILITARY COLORS, MASONIC FLOOR CLOTHS and APRONS, and LANDSCAPE PAINTING."

Lorrain was killed in November 1819. The *Petersburg Republican* reported: "We understand that Mr. *John Lorrain*, a respectable youth of our town, promising in

talents, and respectable in society, was lately killed in a duel at New Orleans. . . . We lament that he did not meet a better fate" (*Petersburg Intelligencer*, 23 Dec. 1814, 17 Sept. 1816; *Petersburg Daily Courier*, 22 June 1815; *Raleigh Register*, 1 Nov. 1816; *Petersburg American Star*, 23 Aug. 1817; *Petersburg Republican*, 26 Nov. 1819).

McCLOUD (MCLEOD), John. *Cabinetmaker* (1787-1795).

Listed in the 1773 *Norfolk County Order Book* was an order that the Church wardens of Elizabeth River Parish "bind John McCloud to John Seldon according to law" (see Selden, John). Seldon worked in Norfolk, where he was trained, for nearly twenty years before losing his shop when the city was burned in January 1776, at the start of the Revolution. After the fire, he relocated to Blandford and resumed the cabinetmaking business. It is not clear whether Seldon brought McCloud with him, but beginning in 1787, McCloud was listed in the Petersburg tax records as living in Blandford. That year he was assessed for two black servants above the age of sixteen and one below. In 1789 David Coleman, "a free mulatto Boy" was apprenticed to McCloud "to learn the Trade of Cabinetmaker."

Little is known about McCloud's furniture-making career in the Petersburg area. Like many other furniture-makers, he made coffins. In the late 1780s, for example, he charged the local court 24 shillings for the coffin of Mrs. Choppin, a poor resident of Petersburg. Apparently McCloud's work brought him a modest degree of wealth, for he owned both land and slaves. In 1791 he and his wife Isabella, a native of Norfolk, deeded a lot in that city to Patrick Parker for £100. The register for the Bristol Parish Church in Blandford recorded that "Aggy," a slave belonging to McCloud, gave birth to a daughter named Louisa in 1790, and that three years later John and Isabella had a son named John S. McCloud. In 1790 he paid tax on his Blandford "mansion," indicated in subsequent tax lists as lot 17. This property was adjacent to that of another Petersburg cabinet-maker, Alexander Taylor (see TAYLOR, Alexander).

McCloud entered his will at Petersburg's Hustings Court on 14 January 1795, and it was probated that June. Listed in his inventory were a variety of case and seating furniture, looking and dressing glasses, tables, an "eight day clock" valued at over £7, a "Japaned Sugar box with no lid," and a "liquor case & bottles," and some of these items may have been by his own hand (see Appendix B). McCloud bequeathed Isabella the house and lot in Blandford, property that was to pass, in order, to son John, daughter Sarah, and son Andrew Hamilton. Isabella was given use of the "shop," as well as "the Negro woman [B]etty." Sarah received a pair of silver sugar tongs, six silver teaspoons, and an eight-day clock. Andrew got a silver ladle marked "DR," a pair of silver sugar tongs marked "D'E," six silver teaspoons, and six silver tablespoons, as well as two large looking glasses in mahogany frames. McCloud left his eldest son John "my Bible and Prayer Book." The document concluded "My Will and desire is that all my Shop Tools, Stock of Timber and materials for my business, with what furniture may be on hand in my Shop, may be Sold for the best price, and the moneys arising therefrom, after my Funeral expenses and just debts are paid, shall remain at the disposal of my Wife for the purpose of Educating our children in the fear of the Lord, which God Grant."

The executors of McCloud's estate, Ebenezer Scott and William Gray, offered his shop materials for sale, including "a variety of Tools, some Furniture, with Mahogany, Walnut, and other materials used in the Cabinet-makers business." In 1798 McCloud's estate was taxed not only \$60 for the lot 17 residence, but also \$7 for lot 89 in Blandford and taxes continued to be paid by the estate through 1820 (*Norfolk County Order Book*, 1773, 163a; *Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book 1*, 1784-1791, 286; *Norfolk City Deed Book 2*, 1791-1793, 39; *Virginia Gazette*, and *Petersburg Intelligencer*, 30 June 1795; *Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 1*, 1784-1805, 231-32, 295; *Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book*, 1797-1800, 1 Sept. 1800; *The Vestry Book and Register of Bristol Parish Virginia, 1720-1789*, Richmond: William Ellis Jones, 1898, 343-44; *Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books*, 1789-1820; *Petersburg Land Tax Books*, 1788-1820).

McCORMICK (M'CORMICK), James. *Cabinetmaker, Coffinmaker* (1791).

In February 1786 McCormick first advertised his cabinetmaking services in Baltimore, Maryland. Apparently a native of Ireland, he had "for some Years past worked in the first Shops in Dublin." By May 1786, McCormick moved to Alexandria, Virginia, where he offered mahogany and walnut "cabinet and chair work in the newest and neatest manner" and again recalled his "long experience in some of the first shops in England and Ireland."

By November 1787 McCormick was in Norfolk, where, in the former "Printing-office, and next door to the present," he offered a complete line of goods in the "Cabinet and Chair-making Business" worked in the "neatest manner." He also had on hand "some Ready made Furniture of the newest taste." Like other Virginia cabinetmakers, McCormick made coffins and offered "Funerals supplied on the shortest notice." Little else is known of his cabinetmaking work in Norfolk.

Sometime after 1787, McCormick moved his business once more, upriver to Petersburg. Unfortunately, little is known of his time there. He died in June 1791, and the public sale of his estate, administered by his wife Susanna, included "a quantity of mahogany, oak, pine, and poplar PLANK, mahogany SCANTLING; twelve very handsome mahogany CHAIRS, nearly finished; a chest of Cabinet-maker's tools, a WORK-BENCH, and a mahogany desk."

In August 1793 the overseers for the poor in Alexandria bound "James McCormack" at the age of fourteen as "apprentice to Joseph Ingle who is to learn him the trade of a cabinetmaker." In his study of early Norfolk cabinetmaking traditions, Ronald L. Hurst surmised that he was the son of James McCormick (*Maryland Journal & Baltimore Advertiser*, 21 Feb., 7 Apr. 1786; *Virginia Journal & Alexandria Advertiser*, 11 May 1786; *Norfolk & Portsmouth Journal*, 21 Nov. 1787; *Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer*, 23 June 1791; Borough of Alexandria Hustings Court Order Book, No. 28, 146; Hurst, "Norfolk," 123-25).

McFARQUHAR (M'FARQUHAR), John. *Coffinmaker, Cabinetmaker? Carpenter?* (1788-1794).

John McFarquhar remains an enigmatic figure among the artisans included in this study. Outstanding evidence clearly indicates his work as a coffinmaker and strongly suggests his additional services as a carpenter and cabinetmaker. In March 1788 McFarquhar was mentioned in a lawsuit as having in his possession certain tools belonging to Thomas Wilton, the plaintiff in the case. These objects, to be sold by the court, included planes, saws, "brase and bits," a brush, a dictionary, a hone, and one chest; the outcome of the case is not known. Such tools were commonly used by a wide variety of woodworkers and tell us little about McFarquhar's specific trade. Indeed, the only references to his work in Petersburg's early court records cited his production of relatively inexpensive coffins for the poor.

In 1789 Bennett Aldridge, the orphaned son of Peter Aldridge, was apprenticed to McFarquhar. Unfortunately, no mention was made of the particular trade he was to learn. That year McFarquhar appeared in the city tax lists, paying for one adult black male and one horse. Beginning in 1789, McFarquhar was noted in "Orders Entered Concerning the Poor in the town of Petersburg" as the supplier of six inexpensive coffins for which he received between 16 and 18 shillings each. During this period he was also involved in a number of legal actions in Petersburg.

Documentary evidence suggests that McFarquhar was never affluent. For example, the 1788 land tax records stated that he rented a lot from Mary Bolling, an indication that he was not a property owner. By the 1780s, Mary Bolling was the wealthiest landholder in Petersburg, leasing dozens of downtown properties and many more in Blandford. Interestingly, between 1788 and 1793 McFarquhar rented properties from four different owners, but the specific sites were not noted. He died in 1794, and the property where he resided was ordered by the court to be rented out "for the best price that can be had." Among those appointed to appraise his estate was cabinetmaker William Stainback (see STAINBACK, William). McFarquhar's personal property in-

cluded two cupboards (one unfinished), a "lot of old locks hinges &c.," two drawers, one "Shew Glass frame," five sashes, 154 feet of plank, two door frames, one "chest & tools," two workbenches and "screws," an inkstand and canister, seven pairs of bed hinges, one bedstead and a glue pot. A number of these items suggests his work as a house carpenter and furniture-maker (Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book 1, 1784-1791, 221, 259, 286, 287, 293; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book 2, 1791-1797, 81, 122; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1797-1800, 1 Sept. 1800; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1789-1793; Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1788-1793).

McKEEN, Robert. *Windsor Chairmaker* (1793-1796).

By 1793 Robert McKeen's Windsor chairmaking business in Dinwiddie County was apparently well-established. That year he advertised in a Petersburg newspaper:

WINDSOR CHAIRS AND SETTEES. THE Subscriber begs leave to inform the public and his friends, that he carries on the business of WINDSOR CHAIR making, in its various branches, at Dinwiddie Court-house, and flatters himself that he can supply any person who may incline to favor him with their custom, in that line, with those articles, as cheap as they can be got elsewhere, and warranted—He returns his unfeigned thanks to his respective customers for past favors, and hopes to merit that encouragement in future, which he has so liberally experienced since his commencement of business in Virginia.

Because his shop was at least twelve miles from Petersburg, he made an arrangement by which "Any person may be supplied with the above articles, by applying to Mr. Francis Brown," a coachmaker on Old Street in the city. McKeen also asked for the application of an apprentice to learn the business of Windsor chairmaking. Importantly, McKeen was Petersburg's first documented artisan specializing in the production of Windsor seating furniture.

Perhaps because of the larger clientele, McKeen moved his chairmaking operation to Petersburg in 1795, where he was taxed for one black adult male, a horse, and two-fifths occupation of lot 28 on High Street. In 1796 McKeen insured the buildings on this site, specifically, a one-story wooden dwelling house valued at \$700 and a two-story "wooden chair makers shop" valued at \$400. He last appeared in the city tax lists in 1800. No subsequent references to his Windsor chairmaking activities in Petersburg are known. By 1801, McKeen was living in Warrenton, North Carolina, and apparently no longer was involved in the Windsor trade. Instead he announced the opening of a "House of Entertainment. . . . AT THE SIGN OF THE EAGLE, Where travellers can be accommodated in the best manner, having good forage and attentive hostlers" (*Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer*, 6 Sept. 1793; *Virginia Gazette and Richmond Chronicle*, 1 July 1794; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 10, 11 May 1796; *Petersburg Republican*, 3 Aug. 1801; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1795-1800; Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1795).

MALLORY, Roger. *Coffinmaker, Cabinetmaker? Warehouse?* (1803?-1818).

In February 1803 a Petersburg resident named Roger Mallory was involved in a legal dispute in Petersburg, and in 1815 a person with the same name was listed as a member of Blandford Masonic Lodge No. 3. It is not clear if these were references to the same person who advertised in the *Petersburg Intelligencer* in January 1818: "ROGER MALLORY HAS ON HAND— . . . A NICE PARCEL CABINET FURNITURE Consisting of Sideboards, Bureaus, Writing Desks, Tables, & c., for sale on very accommodating terms." It is interesting that no mention is made of Mallory's actually producing this furniture. The term "parcel" may well indicate that these were ready-made wares purchased by him for resale. Furthermore, it cannot be discerned from available records whether he ran a cabinetmaking shop, a cabinet wareroom, or a retail shop that also sold furniture. The latter was suggested by an 1817 advertisement that simply noted that "ROGER MALLORY has for sale, and will keep a constant supply of WHEAT FANS, made

by Mr. George Dillworth, who is well known in this place as a master workman" (see DILLWORTH, George). Several days after this notice was placed, J. L. Clapdore, a retail merchant who also sold Dillworth's wares, reminded the public that orders could be "left with Roger Mallory in Petersburg."

Mallory first appeared in the Petersburg tax records in 1814. The extensive 1815 tax lists stated that in addition to four slaves, he owned two horses, a carriage, cattle, a silver watch, and a mahogany chest of drawers, dining table, and three card tables. He also owned a Windsor settee or "sopha," and paid a \$30 retail tax for his business. By 1816, Mallory lived in Ward W in the city. His prosperity was annually documented in the tax records through 1820.

The Spotsylvania County will books for 1821 noted that \$3 was taken from the estate of Susanna Cason, and paid to "R. Mallory for coffin." It is possible that this was the same artisan, although it is not known where Mallory was living at the time (*Petersburg Republican*, 1, 4 July 1817; *Petersburg Intelligencer*, 9 Jan. 1818; Spotsylvania County Will Book K, 1820-1824, 110; William Moseley Brown, *Blandford Lodge No. 3 A.F. & A.M.: A Bicentennial History*, Petersburg: Plummer Printing Co., 1957, 43; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1814-1820).

MASON, George. *Cabinetmaker, Upholsterer* (1806-1813).

MASON, Mary C. *Cabinetmaking Shop Proprietress* (1813-post 1820).

Petersburg's Mason and Russell families were a prolific and important part of the town's early furniture-making history. The relevant lineage began with Jonathan Russell, a Petersburg chairmaker (see RUSSELL, Jonathan). His daughter Mary C. Russell married George Mason, a successful cabinetmaker who left behind one of the most complete and informative inventories for a furniture-maker in the Tidewater region—one that not only reflected high level of social achievement, but also Petersburg's importance as a regional commercial center (see Appendix C). After his death in 1813, Mary C. Mason assumed control of the business and hired her brother, William Russell, to manage its daily operations. He soon inherited the business, which he apparently ran into the 1830s. In short, when the individual histories of this furniture-making family are considered together, they represent a major part of the trade in Petersburg. Furthermore, a number of important social and economic patterns emerge that perhaps suggest the experiences of other local artisan families.

In November 1806 George Mason advertised for the return of a stray horse that could be delivered either to him or to "Mr. Joel Brown, on Old Street," a Windsor chairmaker whose shop was located across the street (see BROWN, Joel). Three years later Mason took on an apprentice named "Toma," a free black bound out by the Overseers for the Poor in Greensville County. In 1810 Mason advertised his "Cabinet Makers Business" on Old Street where he had "on hand a parcel of prime MAHOGANY" and intended to carry on the business "in the most modern and approved style." Mason's building apparently was large enough that several rooms were rented to other interests. For example, in 1810 "Messrs. Laurent and Dufour" opened a "Fencing School . . . at Mr. Mason's, Old Street."

Success came quickly to Mason's cabinetmaking venture. In October 1811 he placed an advertisement that ran repeatedly for a year and thanked the public for its patronage, adding that he would continue to provide work in his line "in the most fashionable and faithful manner, and for sale at reduced prices." This notice also called for the application of two journeymen and two apprentices, an indication that his shop was growing. Mason's economic rise is further evidenced in the town records. Taxed only for himself in 1807 and 1810, by 1811 three white males—probably employees—were a part of his household. Also listed was one female, perhaps his wife Mary.

Additionally, Mason sold furniture that he imported. In 1813, for example, he announced "ELEGANT CHAIRS . . . THE subscriber in addition to a handsome assortment of Cabinet Furniture on hand, has just received fourteen Dozen very elegant and well made FANCY AND WINDSOR CHAIRS, SETTEES, WRITING CHAIRS and MUSIC STOOLS, superior to any heretofore offered in this place." These may well have

been from New York, for his successor subsequently advertised Windsor and fancy chairs from that state. Later in 1813, Mason advertised his receipt of another fourteen dozen Windsor and fancy chairs, a gig, and, shortly, "a few Good MATTRESSES."

By 10 August 1813, Mason was "confined to bed," at which time he wrote his extensive will. His death was announced several days later. Mary Mason was named "sole heir and Executrix," and one month later Samuel White and Alexander Taylor, both of whom were Petersburg cabinetmakers, appraised his entire estate. An inventory of Mason's shop buildings recorded a cabinetmaking operation that was, perhaps, the largest in town at that time, including eight workbenches, a turning lathe and tools, and a complete selection of cabinetmaking tools. Also listed were a large variety of finished and unfinished seating, case, bed, "Fancy," and "Windsor" furniture, as well as an assortment of upholstery materials, a large quantity of cabinet woods, and, interestingly, "1000 shingles." Mason owned several slaves, as well as a number of valuable vehicles including a "gigg," a "coachee," a cart and harness, and a hearse, the latter suggesting his involvement in the provision of funerary services. He also had a "small library of books."

In October 1813 Mary Mason advertised in *The Republican*: "Cabinet-Making. THE subscriber begs leave to inform the friends of her deceased husband, and the public, that she continues to carry on the CABINET-MAKING BUSINESS, in all its various branches, under the management of her brother *William Russell*, at the Shop, on Old Street, where every species of Cabinet Furniture may be had at the shortest notice, and on the most reasonable terms." A contemporary insurance appraisal described the shop as Located on lot 42, land purchased by Mary's late father, chairmaker Jonathan Russell, from cabinetmaker William Stainback, and still occupied by his widow Martha (see RUSSELL, Jonathan, RUSSELL, William H., and STAINBACK, William). Apparently, upon his marriage to Mary Russell, George Mason moved both himself and his cabinetmaking operation to lot 42. Because the Russell family paid the property taxes that lot, Mason's disappearance from the town's land tax records after 1811 can be explained by his move. The Russell family owned nearby property as well; in 1811 they began to be taxed for a portion of lot 46.

Mary's enlistment of William to manage the shop was a logical one. He almost certainly still lived on the property, and a later advertisement that described his training with one of the "best workmen in the state" suggests that he trained under Mason, rather than his father, who died in 1801. As late as January 1814 Mary Mason continued to oversee the business, and she advertised for two cabinetmaking apprentices. Around that time, she married Martin Thayer, a member of the new Presbyterian Church in Petersburg and son of Petersburg blacksmith and nailmaker Sceva Thayer. In December 1815 Thayer paid the insurance on lot 42, identified as "four buildings on the South side of Old Street now occupied by myself and W^m. Russell"; notably, however, Martha A. Russell still lived on and owned the property. The structures Thayer insured were specifically referred to as a one-story wooden dwelling house and a one-story cabinet wareroom that fronted Old Street, a 50-by-16-foot, single-story, wood-frame carriage house, and a large, three-story, brick cabinetmaker's shop and kitchen. This latter building was valued at \$3,000, more than three times as much as any other building on the lot, and was certainly large enough to support the extensive cabinetmaking operation described in George Mason's will. Ownership of such buildings further suggests the considerable wealth of the Russell/Mason family.

Petersburg personal property tax records for 1815 listed "Russell and Thayer," indicating that Martin and Mary Thayer were still living on lot 42 with Martha Russell. After 1815, however, there is no record of Mary or Martin Thayer being involved in the cabinetmaking operation. One year later, the Thayers moved onto lot 43, property rented from the estate of Abraham Evans, and William Russell took over sole management of the cabinetmaking shop.

In 1826 the original dwelling on lot 42 "burnt." At the time of the fire, the property was still occupied by William Russell, his family, and his mother Martha. Around that time Martin and Mary C. Thayer disappeared from the city records, although one tax list

suggested that they moved to New England sometime before 1830. The Thayers had at least two children, Martin Russell Thayer and William P. Thayer, who by 1856 were living in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Sangamon County, Illinois, respectively. Petersburg's Hustings Court records for that year noted that the Thayer brothers deeded to Martha Peterson of Petersburg their deceased mother's property, the same lot 42 on Old Street "that was conveyed to Jonathan Russell, dec^d by William Stainback and wife by deed dated the 11th day of July 1793 . . . and the same that was occupied as a dwelling or homestead by the late W.^m H Russell deed & his family" (Petersburg Hustings Court Deed Book, No. 2, 358; Petersburg *Republican*, 20 Oct., 17 Nov. 1806, 24 Oct. 1811, 3 Aug. 1812, 12 Jan., 8 Oct. 1813, 20 May 1814; Greenville County, Va., Order Book No. 4, 3-45; Petersburg *Intelligencer*, 8 May 1810, 6 Nov. 1811, 13 Aug. 1812, 24 Mar. 1815; Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, 85, 89-91; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 70: 17-69; Petersburg Hustings Court Deed Book 23, 611; Brown, *Blandford*, 157; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1787-1830; Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1787-1830).

MATTHEWS, Graves. *Windsor Chairmaker* (1814-1817).

Beginning in 1814, the partnership of "Seaton & Matthews" advertised their Windsor chairmaking shop, located "a little below Powell's Tavern, on Sycamore, and nearly fronting Bank Street." Leonard Seaton and Graves Matthews informed "the citizens of this place, and the country generally that they have on hand and intend constantly to keep an assortment of Windsor Chairs, made in the best and of the most approved fashions. . . . TURNING executed in all its various branches to suit Mechanics" (see SEATON, Leonard).

Several documented Windsor sidechairs from their shop are known, simple fan-back forms with bamboo turned legs, tapered spindles, and an unusual squaring of the leading edge of the seat—a pattern that appears on other Petersburg-area Windsors. One of the Seaton and Matthews examples, published in Paul Burrough's *Southern Furniture*, includes a label that reads "ALL KINDS OF WINDSOR CHAIRS MADE & SOLD, (WARRENTED) BY SEATON & MATTHEWS, SYCAMORE STREET, PETERSBURG." Another labeled Windsor side chair (MRF S-6569) has the additional description of their Sycamore Street shop as located "A LITTLE BELOW POWELL'S TANN—" (probably Powell's Tavern). Although no dissolution announcement for Seaton and Matthews is known, by 1815 Leonard Seaton was back in Richmond, where he had originally apprenticed with Windsor chairmaker William Pointer.

In 1817 Matthews became involved in another Windsor partnership, this time with Alexander Brown (see BROWN, Alexander). That year "Matthews & Brown" offered a "TEN CENTS REWARD" for a runaway apprentice named James Denoon, who was described as "upwards of 20 years old, five feet three or four inches high, had black hair which curls, blue eyes, and is very much marked in the face by the small pox." Several months later the partners advertised again:

MATTHEWS & BROWN CHAIRMAKERS, SIGN-PAINTERS & TURNERS, RESPECTFULLY inform their customers and the public in general, that they have now on hand and intend to keep, at their Shop on Old street, a few doors above French's Tavern, a general assortment of elegant WINDSOR CHAIRS, Settees, Bedsteads, Cradles, Gigg-Seats, Writing Chairs, and every other article in their line; — which they offer for sale, on the most accommodating terms. PAINTING & GILDING of every description, executed in the neatest manner, on short notice. Orders in either branch of their business, will be thankfully received & punctually attended to.

Their services closely paralleled those offered by Joel Brown—probably Alexander's close relative—including a broad range of Windsor furniture forms, as well as turning, painting, and gilding. No further references to Matthews and Brown or to Alexander Brown on his own are known. By 1818, the cabinetmaking partnership of Lewis Marks, Machie l'Anson, and Ezra Stith advertised their new shop located "a few doors above French's Tavern," possibly Matthews and Brown's old shop (see l'ANSON, Machie D.).

Like many other Petersburg artisans, Matthews responded to the increased importation of northern furniture into Petersburg by following the lucrative trade routes down to North Carolina. In 1818 the firm of "Matthews, Ruth, & Co.," opened in Raleigh:

THE SUBSCRIBERS HAVE the pleasure of announcing to the Public, that they have established the Business of Chair Making, Sign Painting, Turning, &c. in the new House lately built by Mr. Edmund Lane, on Wilmington street, a few doors South of the Post-Office—where they will attend to any orders in their line which the public may favor them with—and where all Work will be executed with neatness and despatch, at the shortest notice. GRAVES MATHEWS. DAVID RUTH. N. B. They will take two or three BOYS from the age of 14 to 16 as Apprentices to the above business. They will endeavor to use every exertion to learn them the art of the Windsor Chair Making business, in all its various branches. Boys from the Country would be preferred. MATTHEWS & RUTH.

Within a year, the partners had removed their shop to "Newbern-street" where they carried on the same business under the new name of "Matthews, Ruth, & Co." No later references to their partnership are known (Richmond *Virginia Argus*, 9 Apr. 1814; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 70, 1832; Petersburg *American Star*, 23 June, 7 Aug. 1817; *Raleigh Register*, 30 Jan., 10 Apr. 1818).

MILLER, Robert. *Cabinetmaker, Warehouser?* (1802-1805).

Miller first appeared in area tax records in 1802, and one year later he advertised the removal of his "Ware-room one door higher on Bollingbrook Street, opposite Mr. Geddy's, Watchmaker." At this shop Miller had on hand "an elegant assortment of FURNITURE of the very best quality." In 1804 he again publicized a selection of ready-made furniture, saying that he wished "to inform the Public that he has on hand a quantity of fashionable MAHOGANY FURNITURE."

Miller died in March 1805, and his obituary read: "DIED On the same day, Mr. Robert Miller, Cabinet Maker of this town. . . . As he lived, so he died." In April 1806 Martha Rogers, the administratrix of his estate, advertised a "PUBLIC SALE" of his personal property; an inventory was recorded on the same day. Miller's estate appraisal totaled £63.14.11 and was undertaken by four Petersburg citizens, three of whom—Alexander Taylor, Samuel White, and John Vaughan—were involved in the furniture trades (see TAYLOR, Alexander, WHITE, Samuel, and VAUGHAN, John). The sale included "sundry pieces of Mahogany Furniture, a complete set of Cabinet-Maker's Tools, a quantity of Mahogany Timber sawed ready for use, and some other property of different kinds" (*Petersburg Intelligencer*, 30 Aug. 1803, 28 Aug. 1804, 18 Mar. 1805, 15 Apr. 1806; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1805-1808, 6 Apr. 1806; Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, 9; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1802).

NEAL, William. *Upholsterer* (1816-1820).

William Neal, a British upholsterer, arrived in America in 1806 at the age of thirty-three. He first worked in Boston, on Washington Street, and, in 1809, was listed in the city's artisan directory as an "upholsterer." Later that year, he moved to Baltimore, where he noted his "many years experience in France and England" and his ability to produce "Drawing-room Curtains and Drapery of every description, executed in the first stile and elegance." By the time of the War of 1812, Neal was in Richmond, where, along with his wife and four children, he applied for status as a British alien.

William Neal was first recorded in Petersburg in the 1814 tax books, assessed for one white male and one black male below the age of sixteen. It is not entirely clear if this was the upholsterer because two individuals with that name resided in Petersburg through 1820. The sale of an extensive plantation in Dinwiddie County in 1818 by "William Neal," which included a wide variety of furniture, may not refer to the upholsterer. However, it is clear that in 1816 William Neal, the artisan, advertised his

business, located in the shop of John DeJernatt, one of Petersburg's more successful cabinetmakers (see DEJERNATT, John):

THE SUBSCRIBER HAVING COMMENCED THE Upholstery Business, Solicits the patronage of the inhabitants of the town of Petersburg; having full knowledge of the above business, in making up all kinds of FURNITURE In a Superior Manner SUCH AS Sophas, Settees, Chairs and all kinds of Draperys & Drawing-room CURTAINS & CARPETS, cut and made to fit rooms, all kinds of paperhanging, executed in the neatest manner. N. B. Old sophas & Chairs repaired in the neatest manner by applying to the subscriber at Mr DeJernett's, Cabinet-maker, Old street. WILLIAM NEAL.

Little else is known about Neal's career, although as one of the few local upholstery specialists, it might be suspected that he was in great demand. Neal nonetheless encountered significant financial difficulties in 1819 and entered into a deed of trust with William Rose. That deed was put into effect in early 1820 when "sundry articles of Household and Kitchen furniture, one horse and cart, one cow, the balance of the lease of the house and lot now occupied by said Neal" were offered at a public sale. No other references to his activities in town are known (*Boston Directory*, 1809; *Baltimore Evening Post*, 5 Sept. 1809; *Baltimore Directory*, 1810-1812; Kenneth Scott, comp., *British Aliens in the United States During the War of 1812*, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1979; Petersburg Republican, 20 Feb. 1816. Petersburg Republican, 14 Jan. 1817, 13 Oct. 1818; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1814-1820).

POWELL, Richard and Faux, Joseph. *Cabinetmakers, Carvers, Joiners, Turners, Gilders, Undertakers* (1783-1790).

The records of Richard Powell and Joseph Faux and their furniture-making tenure in Petersburg are, at best, rather sketchy. However, an advertisement of their subsequent business in Fayetteville, North Carolina, suggests that their activities in Petersburg were considerable. Powell and Faux noted their European training and their ability to perform a wide range of woodworking services, including carving, a skill rarely mentioned by Petersburg furniture-makers.

Powell and Faux appeared together in the 1787 Petersburg tax lists, an indication that they probably lived in the same building. No mention was made of their business. Powell alone was noted in the 1788 tax lists, but a year later, he and Faux rented lot 49 in Blandford from Alexander Taylor, a cabinetmaker. Their stay there apparently was brief. Taylor's tax records for 1790 listed lot 49 as "lately Faux & Powell's tenement."

Explaining their removal from the property was an advertisement in the 1 February 1790 issue of the *Fayetteville Gazette*:

POWELL & FAUX, Carpenters, Joiners, Cabinet-Makers, Turners, Carvers, Gilders, and Undertakers, . . . having been regularly reared in the above branches in Europe, and their many years experience in America, flatter themselves that they can give satisfaction to all who would wish to employ them. . . . They will be in this town, if the weather permits, about the first of February next, and having five apprentices and a journeyman who is a master of his trade, can undertake any job within themselves.—Undoubted recommendations from Petersburg, Virginia can be produced, where they have lived almost seven years. They also do sign painting in general. A good price given for Walnut, Cherry, and birch. N. B. The subscriber will remain some days in town, and will contract with any gentlemen who may wish to employ them.

Their provision of Petersburg references strongly suggests that they enjoyed some degree of success during their time there. "Powell & Faux" appeared together again in the 1790 federal census, noted as living in a Fayetteville household with five free white males above sixteen years of age, one below that age—likely the apprentices and journeyman they mentioned in their advertisement. Also listed were one female, and

one slave. No further references to them are known (Bivins, *FCNC*, 493; Federal Census for 1790; Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1787-1790).

PRIEST, John. *Windsor Chairmaker* (1806-1808?).

In 1806 John Priest and George Dillworth announced the opening of their Petersburg shop, where they offered a variety of wares and services including "Wheat Fan making, Wire-work, of all kinds, Windsor Chairs, Settees, Riding Chair Bodies" and the making of "Japan and Copal Varnishes" (see DILLWORTH, George). This is the only known reference to their partnership. Priest's subsequent Windsor chairmaking businesses in other cities, as well as Dillworth's continuing production of only wheat fans and wire-work in Petersburg, suggests that each contributed different skills to the business.

After leaving Petersburg, Priest moved south to Nashville, Tennessee. There, in 1808, he advertised his "WINDSOR CHAIR MANUFACTORY," describing the services in detail under a wood engraving of a Windsor chair with dramatically splayed legs and the letters "I. P" incised on the seat. At his new location "on Water-Street, Near M. Jackson's gin," Priest not only made Windsor chairs, but also provided "SIGN PAINTING AND COACH PAINTING," a common trade combination in the Petersburg area. He remained in Nashville, possibly an indication that the business was doing well, and, in 1812, offered this creatively written public notice:

ON Saturday the 28th, December 1811, the renowned Don Carolus the Weaver, (alias) Charles McKarahan the Chairmaker, made his manly appearance before Benjamin H Bradford, Esq. to claim the amount of Ten dollars, which he knavishly suspected I owed him; but alas! The last was against him. His claim was upwards of three years of age, and his Donship was extremely mortified that he could not recover in justice, which was the cause of the splenetick publication in the last Clarion.—If I should attempt to exhibit an account of the discretion his Donship did I should consider myself out of the line of common honesty at least; and if his Donship means I plead payment of any amount by limitation, Favor it to be a RASH FALSEHOOD.—If character is to be kept his Donship has but little trouble.

By 1816 Priest had relocated to Columbia, South Carolina, where he announced his cabinetmaking partnership with James Beaty, the only reference to this venture (*Petersburg Intelligencer*, 11 July 1806; *Nashville Impartial Review and Cumberland Repository*, 24 Mar. 1808; *Nashville Democratic Clarion and Tennessee Gazette*, 7 Jan. 1812; Petersburg City Personal Property Tax Books, 1805, 1807).

RAYMOND, John. *Cabinetmaker* (1815-post 1820).

Raymond's earliest Petersburg associations were with Betsey Allegrue, a successful "free black" businesswoman, who, after 1801, annually appeared in the city tax lists paying for a "license," possibly an indication that she ran a boarding house. In October 1815 Allegrue insured her "three Buildings on the North side of Old Street in the Town of Petersburg now occupied by myself & John Raymond" (William Graham, an architectural historian at Colonial Williamsburg, believes that both Raymond and Allegrue may well have been French-Haitians who arrived in town during the early national period). Listed on her portion of lot 7 on Water (Old) Street were two dwelling houses and a "store house," while cabinetmaker John DeJernatt occupied the other part of the property.

Apparently, Raymond moved out shortly thereafter. In November 1815 John Fisher, Allegrue's neighbor to the west, insured his "one building on the North Side of Old Street in the town of Petersburg now occupied by Raymond & Ventus," referring to Raymond's cabinetmaking partnership with John Ventus, a free black cabinetmaker who trained and worked in Norfolk before moving to Petersburg in 1813 (see VENTUS, John). The building they occupied was referred to as a "Dwelling house and Cabinet Shop." By March 1816, Raymond and Ventus returned to Allegrue's property, occupying a two-story wooden "Cabinet Makers Shop & ware room." Such a building was not

noted on Allegrue's previous insurance documents, and may well have been a new or altered structure.

In the highly-detailed 1815 Petersburg tax lists, Raymond was recorded as a "free black." Curiously, the only possession he was assessed for was a silver watch. In August 1816 "Raymond & Ventus" advertised their cabinetmaking shop, located "*A few doors (on the opposite side) above Maj. James Williams's and directly opposite the Old Petersburg Ware-house.*" In addition to thanking the public for its past patronage, they offered "an assortment of work in the line, which they can recommend and dispose of on as accommodating terms, as any manufactory in the borough." The notice went on to proclaim their ability to "execute and dispatch work, in the best, and most fashionable style." That year Raymond and Ventus were taxed for three white adult males and one adult black male, possibly the apprentices and/or journeymen in their shop. Although both remained in Petersburg after 1820, no other references to their partnership or individual careers are known.

Subsequent tax records suggest that Raymond had some sort of personal or financial relationship with Allegrue. After her death in 1830, Allegrue's portion of lot 7 appeared as "Raymond's former mansion" (Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 53: 511, 579, 69: 1682; *Petersburg Republican*, 13 Aug. 1816; Hurst, "Norfolk," 143-44; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1801-1830; Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1806-1830).

REAMY, William. *Cabinetmaker* (1820).

The 1820 Census of Manufacturers in Virginia listed artisans and the number of persons they employed. Under the heading of "Cabinet Maker" in Dinwiddie County was "William Reamy," recorded as having one employee. It is the only known reference to this maker, who may well have worked at Dinwiddie Courthouse or some other smaller center in that rural county (1820 Census of Manufacturers, Virginia, microcopy no. 279, roll 18, item 376).

REYNOLDS, Thomas. *Cabinetmaker* (1803).

In his study of early furniture made in coastal North Carolina, John Bivins concluded that Thomas Reynolds was likely the "Thomas Renald," who in July 1803 had a letter waiting for him at the Petersburg post office. One year later, a cabinetmaker named Jonathan Bird was also listed as having mail held for him in Petersburg; however, by this time the Warrenton, North Carolina, partnership of "Bird & Reynolds, Cabinet-Makers" was in operation (see BIRD, Jonathan). It is not clear whether the two artisans worked together in Petersburg, although the postal references suggest that they knew each other prior to moving to North Carolina. Little is known of their Warrenton venture. By 1807, the year of his death, Bird was in Charleston, South Carolina, where he apparently worked as a cabinetmaker.

Reynolds stayed in Warrenton at least until 1833, when he advertised for an apprentice or journeyman. During his lengthy career, Reynolds ran a considerable furniture-making operation, one that is well documented in Bivins's study. Perhaps striving to meet the region's growing interest in fashionable northern forms, he took on apprentices and journeymen who had previously worked in New York, Philadelphia, and Norfolk. Further suggesting his manufactures were his advertisements proclaiming his production of mahogany sideboards, secretaries with "three fashionable columns," bureaux, and china presses (*Petersburg Intelligencer*, 19 July 1803, 6 Oct. 1804; *Raleigh Register*, 6 Aug. 1804; 12 Apr. 1813; *Warrenton Reporter*, 22 Oct. 1824, 10 Oct. 1833; Bivins, FCNC, 195-96).

ROBERTSON, William. *Cabinetmaker, Grocer, Merchant* (1804-1819).

In 1806 William Robertson, first taxed in the city of Petersburg several years earlier, became involved in a cabinetmaking partnership with William Fore (see FORE, William). That year, "Fore & Robertson" announced their "Cabinet Business" on Bollingbrook Street where they had on hand, "a large and general assortment of Furniture, of the newest fashions; consisting of side-boards and bureaux, card, dining,

and pembroke tables, secretaries and book cases, candle and wash stands, &c &c.." In 1806 Robertson, a native of Scotland, also applied for citizenship at the Hustings Court in Petersburg.

The partnership with Fore was dissolved in 1807, and Robertson assumed control of the operation "to carry on the Cabinet business in all its various branches." Four months later he "resolved to discontinue the cabinet business at this place" and announced a public sale of all his furniture stock, including "Secretaries and book cases, sideboards, card tables, bureaux, easy chairs, candle stands, portable writing desks, bedsteads, and a number of other articles too tedious to mention." Interestingly, no shop equipment or cabinetmaking tools were listed in the sale. A newspaper advertisement in September 1807 intimated Robertson's reasons for leaving the cabinetmaking business. In the notice, T. B. Robertson, a Petersburg lawyer, announced his intention to leave the country and said that his law business would be attended to by his brother William. In February 1809 the post office in Petersburg held a letter for William Robertson, still listed as a "cabinetmaker" in Prince George County (other cabinetmakers in this study received letters long after their deaths or after leaving the city). A month later, Robertson received his citizenship papers, an indication that he had resided in America for at least five years.

By 1811, William Robertson had expanded into the mercantile business. In October, he offered for sale "500 sacks BLOWN SALT, Liverpool filled—50 ditto GROUND ditto, country ditto—11 pieces superfine black cloth." That same month Allan Pollok, a native of Scotland working in nearby Richmond, gave notice in several Petersburg newspapers that Robertson would run the local branch of his considerable mercantile business. In this new capacity, Robertson oversaw the sale, freighting, and charter of ships docked at City Point near present day Hopewell. In 1812 one of these freight advertisements was for the firm of Bridges and Robertson, a reference to Robertson's additional business ventures with James Bridges.

Robertson lost his Bollingbrook Street house in the devastating Petersburg fire of 1815. He advertised that during the catastrophe "a large number of books were taken out of my office by myself and were mislaid after being removed upon the flat near the river," among them a variety of law and history texts. He temporarily moved into a tenement in Blandford, formerly the estate of Major G. K. Taylor, that included a "spacious" dwelling, an "office kitchen," a "stable smoke house," and "other customary out houses." By October 1815, "William Robertson, & Co." was in operation, although that same year, letters for "Wm Robertson, Cabinet Maker" were still being received at the Petersburg post office. Robertson was, by this time, a relatively wealthy man, possessing a number of slaves, as well as horses and an expensive carriage. His household was filled with at least nine pieces of case furniture, ten tables of various sorts, eighteen Windsor chairs, a pianoforte, and a wide variety of other furnishings, including venetian blinds on the windows.

During this period, Robertson served as an agent for the Scottish firm of "Buckanon & Pollok" and as an executor for the estate of Robert Pollok. In fact, Robertson may well be the person of the same name, who, as early as 1783, was working for the Glasgow mercantile firm of "Buckannan, Henry & Co." that sent wares, including nails and furniture hardware, directly to Petersburg and New York. The 1816 will of Allan Pollok, a resident of Chelsea in King William County, noted that his "good friend William Robertson" would continue "winding up and adjusting his affairs." By 1817, Robertson owned property on Market Street. Later that year, he was reelected as a delegate to serve in the upcoming session of the Virginia legislature. He continued his grocer's business, located on St. Paul's Lane, offering salt and "50 crates well assorted Queensware." However, by early 1818, the partnerships of "Bridges & Robertson" in Richmond and "William Robertson & Co." of Petersburg were dissolved.

While it is clear that Robertson's shipping and grocery operations in both Petersburg and Richmond brought him considerable wealth, these later dissolution notices and his subsequent sale of personal property suggest financial difficulties. These may have been brought on by the Panic of 1819, the result of land speculation, poor national

banking practices, and a southern agricultural collapse. The panic caused the prices of crops to fall and land values to decline and prompted massive westward migration. In 1819, Robertson offered for sale three lots "in elligable parts of Pride's Field" including the "improved lot at present occupied by Mr. Robertson." This property was fully equipped with a dwelling house and offices. Included in the sale were "Household and Kitchen furniture" and a "valuable Negro Blacksmith about 22 years of age." Despite his apparent economic difficulties after 1817, Robertson's varied career, including election to public office, successful management of a mercantile firm, and ownership of a several valuable properties, indicates a level of social achievement attained by few other early Petersburg furniture-makers (Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1805-1808, 3 Mar. 1806; Petersburg *Republican*, 17 Nov. 1806, 5 Feb. 1807, 30 Sept. 1807, 9 Feb. 1809, 24 Oct., 11 Nov. 1811, 17 Feb. 1813, 3, 6, 27 Oct., 5, 12 Dec. 1815; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1808-1812, 6 Mar. 1809; Henrico County Will Book No. 5, 1816-1822, 67; Petersburg *Republican*, 21 Feb., 18 Apr., 5 Dec. 1817, 14 Apr. 1818, 9 Apr. 1819; Roller, David C. and Paul V. Crawford, *The Encyclopedia of Southern History*, Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1979, 952-53; Petersburg City Personal Property Tax Lists, 1804-1820; Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1804-1820).

RUSSELL, Jonathan. *Chairmaker* (1793-1801).

In 1793 Jonathan Russell purchased "One certain Piece parcel and Lot of Land lying & being in The town of Petersburg aforesaid, and on the South side of the said Town called old Petersburg. . . the aforesaid lot 42" from Petersburg cabinetmaker William Stainback and his wife, Ann. Although nothing is known about Russell's furniture-making career in Petersburg, an inventory of his estate taken after his death in 1801 strongly suggests that he was a chairmaker (see Appendix D). Administered by his widow, Martha Ann, the inventory listed a large assortment of elegant and modest household furnishings, and several slaves. Russell's shop materials included thirteen Windsor chairs, an assortment of woodworking equipment, among which was "1 Sett Turning Laithes," "3 Work Benches," "1 Grind Stone," "1 Chest Tools including 3 saws," "16 Poplar planks," and a "parcel of Chair makers material & unfinished chairs." One other entry of note was Russell's ownership of the schooner Martha Ann, valued at £700, or roughly 61 percent of the total value of his personal property, excluding lot 42 and its appurtenances. The inventory also included a "lighter or skew valued at £35." Apparently, Russell was involved in the shipping of wares, possibly his own, along the Appomattox River and its estuaries.

Petersburg land tax lists reveal that Martha Russell continued to live on lot 42 through 1827, although the 1826 records noted that the building, referred to as the "widow's mansion," was damaged by fire. During this period, the Russells' daughter, Mary C. Mason, married local cabinetmaker George Mason. He moved into the Russell household and, on their lot, established one of the most extensive furniture-making manufactories in early Petersburg. When he died, Mary assumed control of the shop and hired her brother William H. Russell to serve as foreman (for more on Russell's family members who continued in the furniture-making business, see MASON, George and Mary, and RUSSELL, William. Petersburg Hustings Court Record Deed Book 2, 358; Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book, Vol. 1 (1784-1805): 318; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1787-1827; Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1787-1827).

RUSSELL, William H. *Cabinetmaker* (1813-post 1820).

William H. Russell was a member of the prolific Russell/Mason furniture-making family of Petersburg. In 1793 Russell's father Jonathan, a chairmaker, purchased lot 42 on the south side of Old Street in Petersburg from cabinetmaker William Stainback and his wife Ann (see RUSSELL, Jonathan and STAINBACK, William). It included "the Appurtenances thereunto belonging, together with all Houses buildings and byways." The Russells had at least two children, Mary C. Russell and William H. Russell. Upon Jonathan's death in 1801, Martha remained on the property with them. About 1810

Mary wed cabinetmaker George Mason, who then moved his furniture-making business to the lot 42 site where it flourished (see MASON, George).

Mason died in 1813, and Mary took over the furniture-making business: "Cabinet-Making. THE subscriber begs leave to inform the friends of her deceased husband, and the public, that she continues to carry on the CABINET-MAKING BUSINESS, in all its various branches, under the management of her brother William Russell, at the Shop, on Old Street, where every species of Cabinet Furniture may be had at the shortest notice, and on the most reasonable terms." An inventory of Mason's shop taken at the time of his death suggests that it was, perhaps, the largest in Petersburg at that time. His "Cabinet Makers shop and Kitchen" located in an expensive three-story brick building on the back of lot 42, included eight workbenches, a complete set of cabinetmaking tools, and a large variety of finished and unfinished furniture (see Appendix C). In 1814 Mary advertised for two apprentices to the cabinetmaking trade, noting that "Boys from the country will be preferred, must be well grown and from fourteen to fifteen years of age." Around this time, she married Martin Thayer. They lived on lot 42 with her mother, Martha, and brother, William.

After the devastating July 1815 fire, which destroyed nearly two-thirds of the city, the Petersburg mercantile firm of "Rynex & Gardner" noted that because of the fire, they were removing to Martin Thayer's house on Old Street "next door to Mr. William Russell's Furniture ware room." Apparently, Mary had left the family cabinetmaking operation, for the Thayers were living next door on lot 43, a move documented in the local tax records.

William Russell's independent management of the business was formally announced in 1815:

Cabinet Making Business. William Russell HAVING commenced the cabinet making at the shop formerly occupied by George Mason, intends carrying on in the most extensive line. Having served his apprenticeship with one of the best workmen in the state, he flatters himself he shall be able to give general satisfaction to all those who may please to favor him with their custom. He has on hand a very excellent stock of the best St. Domingo Mahogany, amongst which are some elegant curls, and will be enabled to finish work of every description and of the most fashionable kind, in a superior style to any in the place, having the best workmen which can be procured. Country gentlemen who may please to favor him with their orders, may rely on their being punctually attended to. TURNING Of every description, will be done at his ship, and executed with neatness and dispatch. The whole of the above work will be done for the lowest cash prices.

It is probable that Russell's apprenticeship was served under Mason and not Jonathan Russell, a theory based not only on the strong Russell/Mason family connection and the extensive size of Mason's shop, but also on Jonathan's death in 1801 when William was apparently still a child.

William Russell both manufactured and imported furniture. In May 1815 he declared that he had just received for sale "*Sixteen Dozen Elegant Fancy and Windsor CHAIRS MADE in the state of New-York,*" continuing George Mason's shop practice of importing fancy and Windsor seating furniture. Russell also offered for sale "ten gallons best Japan Varnish, of a superior quality." In June 1815 Russell advertised for additional cabinetmaking apprentices, and several months later, he received a "*Fresh Supply of FANCY & WINDSOR CHAIRS From NEW-YORK; which will be sold at the New-York retail prices,*" as well as "*One dozen best Curled hair MATTRESSES, From PHILADELPHIA.*"

In addition to importing goods, Russell brought in artisans from northern cabinetmaking centers. In July 1816 he notified the public that "Having engaged six or seven workmen, who served their time in the first shops in Philadelphia, New-York and Baltimore, these, together with his former hands, will enable him to execute all orders at the shortest notice." Russell also advertised for "three or four apprentices," and by this time his shop was as large, if not larger, than it had been during Mason's tenure. In

the same notice Russell declared that he had "also constantly on hand, an elegant assortment of fancy and Windsor Chairs, writing or secretary Chairs, Settees, Music Stools, gilt framed Looking Glasses, &c. &c.—The whole of which will be sold at the New-York retail prices." An 1817 announcement for the opening of Elizabeth Davis's School, located "directly opposite Mr. William Russell's Cabinet Ware Room," indicates that he maintained Mason's lot arrangement, with the furniture wareroom fronting Old Street and the large brick shop on the back of the property.

Russell was one of the few Petersburg furniture-makers to remain successful into the 1820s. He also participated in a variety of other activities, including firefighting. While battling a blaze in 1820, he misplaced a "white PLUME, belonging to Mr. P.E. Gill" and "a pair of short BOOTS," which had been placed "under a work bench in the back yard of Mr. Leonard Seaton's house" (Seaton was a Petersburg Windsor chairmaker and this reference to an outdoor workbench is unique in the Petersburg records). Russell died sometime after 1830, and the deed to lot 42 reverted to his sister, Mary Thayer. She passed the property on to her two sons, Martin Russell Thayer and William P. Thayer, who by 1856 were living in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Sangamon County, Illinois, respectively. The Petersburg Hustings Court records for that year noted that the Thayer brothers deeded to Martha Peterson of Petersburg their deceased mother's property, the same lot 42 on Old Street "that was conveyed to Jonathan Russell, dec^d by William Stainback and wife by deed dated the 11th day of July 1793 . . . and the same that was occupied as a dwelling or homestead by the late W.^m H Russell decd & his family" (Petersburg Hustings Court Deed Book 2, 358; Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book 1, 318; Book 2, 85, 89-91; Petersburg *Republican*, 8 Oct. 1813, 20 May 1814, 3 Oct. 1815; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 70: 1769; *Petersburg Intelligencer*, 24 Mar., 26 May, 22 Sept. 1815, 16 Sept. 1816; *Petersburg Republican*, 30 May 1817, 3 Mar. 1820; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1793-1820; Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1793-1820; Petersburg Hustings Court Deed Book 23, 611).

SEAL, James. *Cabinetmaker* (1804).

The only known reference to James Seal, "cabinet-maker," was an October 1804 announcement of a letter held at the Petersburg post office. Similar notices were placed in 1803 and 1804 for cabinetmakers Jonathan Bird and Thomas Reynolds, who like Seal, were not known to have worked in Petersburg (see BIRD, Jonathan and REYNOLDS, Thomas). Possibly Seal was a journeyman or apprentice in one of Petersburg's cabinetmaking shops (*Petersburg Republican*, 6 Oct. 1804).

SEATON, Leonard H. *Windsor Chairmaker* (1814-1816, 1818-1820).

Although Leonard Seaton began his furniture-making career as a poor orphan, he eventually attained economic independence and established successful Windsor chairmaking shops in both Petersburg and Richmond. In January 1800 the Overseers of the Poor for the city of Richmond bound "Leonard Seaton, orphan of Augustine Seaton deceased, unto William Pointer until he arrives at the age of Twenty-one years, The Court adjudging the said Leonard to be seventeen years of age at this time." Pointer was a prolific Windsor chairmaker in Richmond, and signed examples of his work have survived.

By 1808 Seaton was a partner in the Richmond chairmaking firm of Hobday and Seaton with John Hobday. At their shop, adjacent to the City Hotel in Richmond, they offered "FANCY & WINDSOR CHAIR-MAKING, TURNING, SIGN-PAINTING, GILDING, &C." In 1811 "Hobdy and Seaton, Chairmakers" took on fourteen-year-old Fleming Mosely, who like Seaton was an orphan. In April 1812 the firm was dissolved by mutual consent. Seaton assumed control of the business and advertised that he would "continue the Chair Making business at the old stand." (Hobday later became involved with James Barnes in a new Windsor chairmaking partnership, which sold a variety of furniture forms including chairs, settees, cribs, and cradles. Hobday and Barnes was dissolved in 1817, and Hobday took over the operation.)

Leonard Seaton's Windsor chairmaking shop was located in a massive furniture-making complex on the corner of Thirteenth and Main Streets in Richmond. According to 1813 insurance records, he resided on this lot with Edmund Webster and Robert Poore, partners in another Windsor operation. In fact, on this impressive furniture production site was a "Dwelling & Store," a large wooden "Dwelling," a "Cabinet Maker's shop," two adjacent brick kitchens, and a "Dwelling & Chair maker's Shop." Seaton lived in the latter, a one-story wooden building with an attached chairmaking shed. The concentration of these related trades may well have been an effective means for artisans to keep costs down, although within a year the partnership of "Webster & Poore" was dissolved, and the two brick tenements they occupied were sold, as was the "adjoining wood house, occupied by Leonard H. Seaton."

Seaton subsequently moved to Petersburg. In April 1814 the partnership of Seaton and Matthews advertised their Windsor chairmaking business from a shop "a little below Powell's Tavern, on Sycamore, and nearly fronting Bank Street." Leonard Seaton and Graves Matthews informed "the citizens of this place, and the country generally that they have on hand and intend constantly to keep an assortment of Windsor Chairs, made in the best and of the most approved fashions. . . . TURNING executed in all its various branches to suit Mechanics." Matthews, like many other Virginia Windsor chairmakers, was involved in a variety of partnerships during his career (see MATTHEWS, Graves). Several documented Windsor side chairs made by Seaton and Matthews are known, including simple fan-back forms with bamboo turned legs and tapered balusters. An example illustrated in Paul Burrough's *Southern Furniture* bears the label "ALL KINDS OF WINDSOR CHAIRS MADE & SOLD. (WARRENTED) BY SEATON & MATTHEWS, SYCAMORE STREET, PETERSBURG." Another Windsor side chair (MRF S-6569) has the additional description of their Sycamore Street shop as "A LITTLE BELOW POWELL'S TANN__," probably a reference to Powell's Tavern on that same street.

No dissolution announcement for Seaton and Matthews is known; however, in 1815 Seaton had returned to Richmond. That year, Jacob Cohen of Philadelphia insured a Richmond building located next to Richard Crouche's estate and "occupied by Leonard H. Seaton." This property included a "Chair Maker's Shop & Dwelling." Matthews, on the other hand, remained in Petersburg and, by 1817, entered into a Windsor chairmaking partnership with Alexander Brown (see Brown, Alexander). After the demise of that shop, Matthews moved down to Raleigh, North Carolina, where he made Windsor chairs, turned wooded wares, and painted signs with his new partner David Ruth.

By 1818 Seaton was again in Petersburg, where he opened a shop with James Barnes, formerly the partner of Seaton's ex-partner John Hobday—yet another example of the rather incestuous business relationships of many Windsor chairmakers. Seaton and Barnes advertised their services in several area newspapers: "Fancy and windsor Chair MAKING. SEATON & BARNES have commenced the above business, in the next house above Mr. Redmond's tavern, (formerly Powell's,) where they will execute work in their line in the best manner, and warrant it to stand. Two apprentices will be taken to the above business. N. B. Sign Painting will be done in the most modern manner." Like many other furniture-making partnerships, theirs soon ended. Eleven months after opening, Seaton and Barnes went out of business, and the building they leased from merchant Matthew Maben was offered for rent. It was described as "well calculated for a work shop, or Grocery, having an excellent cellar, and a good counting room, sleeping room & Garret"; in 1820, the structure burned in one of the city's numerous major fires.

In a rather confusing progression of references, Seaton was recorded in the 1819 Richmond Directory as a chair maker, just below "William Seaton, chairmaker," who worked on the corner of Thirteenth and F streets. Where Leonard's address should have been listed in the records, there is only a comma, perhaps indicating that he and William occupied the same building. No other references to a William Seaton are known. Yet shortly thereafter, Seaton was recorded in Petersburg. Perhaps he, like a number of other area furniture-makers, was involved in simultaneous operations in both cities. An 1820 advertisement placed in the *Petersburg Republican* by cabinetmaker William H.

Russell stated that he misplaced some personal property while fighting a fire. The articles were placed "under a work bench in the back yard of Mr. Leonard Seaton's house." No further references to Seaton's business ventures are known, although the unusual mention of an outdoor workbench suggests that he may have still been producing furniture (Petersburg Hustings Court Order Book 4, 1797-1801, 357; Richmond *Enquirer*, 8 Nov. 1808, 3 Apr. 1812; Petersburg Hustings Court Order Book 9, 419; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 68: 1192, 70: 1832; Richmond *Virginia Argus*, 9 Apr. 1814; Raleigh *Star and North-Carolina State Gazette*, 23 Jan. 1818; *Richmond City Directory*, 1819; *Petersburg Republican*, 3 Mar. 1820).

SELDEN, John. *Cabinetmaker* (1776-1777).

John Selden was probably the son of Elizabeth City County attorney John Selden and his wife, Grace. Two years after his father's death in 1754, John was apprenticed to John Brown, a carpenter in the city of Norfolk. By 1768 Selden was established as a cabinetmaker in Elizabeth City County where he ran a successful shop for the next eight years. Among his apprentices at that time were Edmond Allmond, who would later establish his own successful Norfolk cabinetmaking shop, and John McCloud, who began his service in 1773 and subsequently followed Seldon to Petersburg (see MCCLOUD, John).

Unfortunately, few details concerning Selden's Norfolk career are known, although some unrelated activities can be documented. For example, in 1769 Norfolk blacksmith Alexander Bell and his wife, Susanna, deeded Selden a lot on Bute Street in the city for £40. Signed examples of his work survive, several at Shirley Plantation in Charles City County. In fact, his reputation as a skilled artisan may be gauged by his commission to refurbish the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg, activity necessitated by the sale of Lord Dunmore's personal property. Ron Hurst concluded in his study of cabinetmaking in Norfolk that "Selden's known work is typical of that made in eastern Virginia's urban centers during the late colonial period, with 'neat and plain' exteriors and extraordinarily built interiors."

Selden was also involved in a variety of activities other than cabinetmaking. For example, in 1770 he was commissioned as a lieutenant in Governor Botetourt's Norfolk militia. That same year, he was listed as a signer of the "Association" in Norfolk, an organization dedicated to boycotting a variety of British wares because of the newly imposed Revenue Acts. Selden participated in legal activities as well, including estate appraisals and jury duty. In one of these instances he chose not to participate as a jurist, was subsequently fined, and then pardoned by Lord Dunmore, Botetourt's successor.

Selden's Norfolk shop was destroyed when British and American troops burned the entire city in January 1776. His personal property losses were estimated at £815. That spring, Selden relocated to the village of Blandford in Prince George County, just outside of Petersburg (incorporated as part of Petersburg in 1784). A July 1776 advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* announced that "THE subscriber, having been one of the unfortunate sufferers at Norfolk, has removed to the place lately occupied by mr John Baird near Blandford where he carries on the CABINET-MAKING business, as formerly, in all its branches. . . . He also has by him, ready made, several dozen neat mohogany, cherry and walnut chairs, tables, desks, tea boards, &c." As with his tenure in Norfolk, more is known of Selden's avocational activities in Petersburg than his business affairs. For example, in January 1777 he was called upon to serve as the administrator for his deceased brother James's estate in Lancaster County. The public announcement of the sale of the land includes an addendum from John Selden that he was additionally selling "100 acres of land" in Fauquier County.

Selden was probably under forty years of age when he died in 1777. His wife, Elizabeth Wallace Selden, sold a portion of his estate, including a "variety of household furniture" and "two clocks." Seven years later, Robert Armistead, administrator of Selden's estate, was still seeking payments and settling outstanding debts. As of 1787, Selden's widow apparently had not remarried. She was assessed for two black males over the age of sixteen and three below. John Selden's estate continued to be charged

land taxes until 1816, records that specify his ownership of lot 96 in Blandford. In 1796 John Selden of Dinwiddie County, possibly the son or nephew of the cabinetmaker, sold a lot on Brewer Street in Norfolk to coppersmith and tinsmith William Dick (Hurst, "Norfolk," 133-36; *William & Mary Quarterly*, 1st ser., 5: 60-62, 264-67; Elizabeth City County Minutes, 1760-1769, 592; Norfolk County Deed Book 24, 204; Williamsburg *Virginia Gazette*, Rind, 26 July 1770; Norfolk County Order Book, 163a, 175; Norfolk County Deed Book 26, 150a; Williamsburg *Virginia Gazette*, Purdie, 26 July 1776, 3 Jan., 12 Dec. 1777; Williamsburg *Virginia Gazette*, Dixon & Hunter, 3 Jan. 1777; Richmond *Virginia Gazette or Independent Chronicle*, 12 June 1784; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1787-1816; Williamsburg, Virginia, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Department of Collections, acc. file L1976-121).

SMITH, John N. *Windsor Chairmaker* (1805).

The only known reference to John N. Smith was the dissolution of his Windsor chairmaking partnership with Archer Brown, a business firm called Smith and Brown. Brown carried on the operation; however, no records of Smith's later activities have been found (see BROWN, Archer. *Petersburg Republican*, 18 Jan. 1805).

STAINBACK, William. *Cabinetmaker, Coffinmaker* (1772-1819).

William Stainback was one of Petersburg's earliest specialized cabinetmakers. His family had been in the area for a long time, evidenced by the presentation of his grandfather's will at the 1739 Prince George County Court. By 1767 Stainback had a four-shilling claim in the Bristol Parish Church. The birth of William and Ann Lambeth Stainback's daughters were listed in the church records: Elizabeth in 1766, Ann in 1769, and Rebecka in 1770.

Stainback advertised in the *Virginia Gazette* in December 1772. The notice, with a Petersburg dateline, offered encouragement for "one or two CABINET and CHAIR MAKERS" to apply for employment and added that Stainback would pay them weekly. He apparently also owned slaves. The Dinwiddie County tax records for 1784 noted five black members of his household, and the Petersburg records for 1787 listed two black males over the age of sixteen and three below that age. During this period, Stainback provided a variety of wooden wares to Petersburg's citizens, including a coffin that in 1789 cost the estate of James Fawcett £3.12.0, a significant amount of money at that time.

By 1788 Stainback resided on lot 42 in Petersburg. The next year, he paid the tax on this property, which by that time was rented to George Bevill. That same year a "Captain Stainback," who may or may not be the same person, lived with John Davis on lot 30, property rented from Ann Thompson who owned five other rental properties in the city. Stainback was again listed on lot 42 by 1791, when he shared the residence with Williamsburg-trained silversmith James Geddy. Two years later, Stainback and his wife, Ann, sold their "mansion" to chairmaker Jonathan Russell. That property, on lot 42, subsequently was occupied by Russell's descendants, many of whom were involved in Petersburg furniture-making operations (see RUSSELL, Jonathan, RUSSELL, William H., MASON, George and Mary C.).

Despite his longevity, Stainback's appearances in the Petersburg records were scarce. Between 1798 and 1805 he paid the city for an unspecified license. In 1798 he was named in a local lawsuit. Later that year, a letter addressed to "Capt. Wm. Stainback" arrived at the post office. One year later William and Ann Stainback sold a lot of land in Princess Anne County to Elizabeth Hunter for £50. The property was part of the inheritance Ann and her late sister, Elizabeth Thelabell, received from their father Nathaniel Thelabell. In 1801 Stainback helped to appraise Jonathan Russell's extensive estate (see Appendix D), and two years later, he was ordered by Petersburg's Hustings Court to appraise the estate of John Burns, a carpenter.

According to the Mutual Assurance Society records for 1803, Stainback owned lots 4 and 5 in Petersburg, and he insured a 16-by-14-foot, one-story, wooden dwelling on lot 4 (curiously, the tax records never mentioned ownership of any buildings on lot 4).

By 1812, a larger, single-story, wooden dwelling house and a single-story kitchen had been added onto lot 5. After 1818, several tenements were listed on the property. Importantly, no record of any workshop was found in any of these early nineteenth-century references, perhaps an indication of Stainback's involvement in other business ventures during this period.

Stainback was one of the earliest established cabinetmakers in Petersburg, but it is not clear if he continued to work as a furniture-maker after about 1800. His will, entered into the Hustings Court records in October 1813, was probated after his death six years later, and Ann Stainback was named as the "sole beneficiary and Executrix." Beginning in 1820, the "Estate of William Stainback" was taxed for the lot 5 property, which by that time had a land value of \$2,625 and buildings worth \$1,750 (*The Vestry Book and Register of Bristol Parish in Virginia, 1720-1789*, 24, 103, 213, 369; *Williamsburg Virginia Gazette*, 3 Dec. 1772; Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805, 9, 318; Petersburg Hustings Court Deed Book 2, 358; *Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer*, 22 June, 3 July 1798; Norfolk County Deed Book 5, 1798-1800, 272; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1800-1804, 4 Apr. 1803; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 29: 2055, 17 Jan. 1812, 1177; Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, 159; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1787-1820; Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1788-1820).

SWANN, Samuel (see ELLIS).

TAYLOR, Alexander. *Cabinetmaker, Coffinmaker* (1786-1805).

In 1786 Alexander Taylor was one of the appraisers of cabinetmaker Hugh Tollock's estate (see TOLLOCK, Hugh). In Petersburg's 1787 tax records, Taylor was assessed for two white males and two black males above the age of sixteen and one black male below that age. In 1790 Taylor began paying taxes for his ownership of lot 16 in "Old Blandford," where he remained for the rest of his life. In 1791 Alexander Taylor, "cabinetmaker," received £1.2.6 from the money "Collected for the poor" in Petersburg for making two inexpensive coffins. Two years later he received an additional £2.8.6 for three coffins produced in 1789. In general, Taylor achieved a relatively high degree of wealth for an artisan. In 1790 and 1791 he rented a "tenement" on lot 49 in "New Blandford" to the cabinetmaking firm of Powell and Faux (see POWELL, Richard and William Faux). Through 1794 he owned a total of three lots in Blandford.

Taylor's fortunes took a turn for the worse in 1792 when his shop was destroyed by fire. The catastrophe was noted by a Baltimore newspaper, which also provided an editorial analysis of the event:

Petersburg, June 7. On Monday last, the shop of Mr. Alexander Taylor, cabinetmaker, of this town, was discovered to be on fire in the upper part of the house. The fire had spread itself considerably over the house before it was discovered, and prevented all attempts to save it. The exertions of some of the citizens on that occasion were truly meritorious, and the activity and vigilance of the Negroes deserve the highest commendation—but we are sorry to observe that too many of the citizens, whose interest was intimately connected in putting an end to so destructive an element, appeared wanting in that day which members of the same community owe to each other. Numbers stood looking on, when they ought to have been more active on so distressing an occasion.

Taylor's business apparently rebounded quickly from this loss. By September 1793 he provided an expensive coffin for the estate of William Hunter at £3.12.0, the same price charged by Petersburg cabinetmaker William Stainback in 1789 for a similar coffin.

Through 1797 he continued his involvement in the production of inexpensive coffins for the poor and costlier coffins for members of Bristol Parish Church. Insurance records from May 1798 described his lot 16 property, located on Main Street in Blandford, as being adjacent to the home of the late cabinetmaker John McCloud. Taylor's property included a wooden single-story "dwelling house" and a two-story

wooden "Cabinet Makers shop" (see MCCLOUD, John). The dwelling was insured for \$1,000 and the shop for \$500. The latter building, located on the corner of the lot, fronted Main and a "cross street." The dwelling was set back in the middle of the lot, a building arrangement used by other Petersburg furniture-makers. Taylor also owned black servants, numbering from six and nine annually between 1790 and 1802.

In 1802 his son Alexander, Jr., became a partner in the cabinetmaking business (see TAYLOR, Alexander, Jr.). At that time the number of adult white males Taylor paid taxes on jumped from two to five, suggesting that the shop simultaneously took on several journeymen or apprentices. In July 1804 "TAYLOR & SON" advertised a "SIX CENTS REWARD" for the return of an apprentice named Michael Burke. Burke was described as being "about nineteen years of age, "5 feet, 3 or 4 inches high, spare made, black eyes and hair, carried with him all his clothing, consisting of a dark blue cloth coat, round brown Holland jacket, two virginia cotton shirt, two pair nanke pantaloons, and one pair brown Holland trowsers." While documents indicate that the Taylors ran a substantial cabinetmaking operation, little is known about their specific manufacture.

On 26 June 1805, Alexander Taylor died at the age of sixty-eight, and was described in his obituary as an "old and respectable inhabitant of this town." He was buried in Blandford Cemetery alongside his wife Sarah, who had died four years earlier at the age of fifty-four. Alexander Taylor, Jr., completed an inventory of the property, and cabinetmaker Samuel White served as one of the appraisers. The entire estate, valued at \$1,898.25, included five black servants (one man, two women, and two boys) and a variety of household and kitchen furniture. Listings in tax records after 1806 suggest that the younger Taylor took over the financial responsibilities for the estate and continued to operate the cabinetmaking operation on lot 16 in Blandford.

Among Alexander Taylor's personal possessions at the time of his death was a "small library" that included a "Cabinet makers Guide" valued at \$4.00. According to a later record, this was a reference to Thomas Chippendale's *Gentleman and Cabinetmaker's Director* (see Appendix E). The volume was inherited by Alexander, Jr., who went on to a long and distinguished career as both a cabinetmaker and public servant. When he died in 1820, his estate included a "parcel of books, among which is the *Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director*, comprehending one hundred and sixty copper-plate engravings of the most elegant designs of household furniture, &c." The ownership of this published design book by two generations of Petersburg cabinetmakers reveals one important way in which British cabinetmaking traditions were brought to the Petersburg area (*Vestry Book and Register*, 254, 268; Dinwiddie County Tax Books, 1787; *Baltimore Daily Repository*, 14 June 1792; Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805, 18; *Petersburg Intelligencer*, 6 July 1804; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1784-91, 131; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1791-1797, 8, 128; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 10: 116; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1797-1800, 1 Sept. 1800; Petersburg *Republican*, 28 June 1805; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1805-1808, 8 Aug. 1805; Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, 38; "Old Blandford Tombstones," *William & Mary Quarterly*, 1st. ser., 5: 234; *Petersburg Republican*, 5 May 1820; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1788-1820; Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1788-1820).

TAYLOR, Alexander Jr. *Cabinetmaker, Coffinmaker* (1801-1827).

In 1801 Alexander Taylor, Jr., helped appraise the estate of carpenter Baldwin Pearce (notable among Pearce's property was a set of "saw mill saws" and a "screw machine"). One year later, Taylor became a partner in "Alex^c. Taylor & Son" with his father, under whom he probably served his apprenticeship (see TAYLOR, Alexander). In 1802 the younger Taylor began a long public service career with his appointment as "Captain of Patroles in Blandford Ward." The Hustings Court returned him to this office in 1804.

City tax records for 1802 listed the Taylors' shop, located on lot 16 in "Old Blandford," which included a 30-by-24-foot "Cabinet Makers shop" fronting Main Street on the corner of a "cross Street." Both artisans lived at this site, in a house located toward

the center of the lot that was adjacent to the property of John McCloud, a cabinetmaker who died in 1795 (see MCCLOUD, John). The Taylors ran a substantial furniture-making operation, which included a number of white male employees, not all of whom were amenable to the situation, as evidenced by the partners' 1801 advertisement for the return of a runaway apprentice named Michael Burke.

When the elder Taylor died in 1805, Alexander, Jr., served as administrator of the portion of his father's estate that was "exclusive of his interest in Taylor & Son." In August 1805 Taylor, Jr., advertised as the "surviving partner of Taylor & Son," noting that he would "continue the Cabinet-making business on my own account, at the shop lately occupied by Taylor & Son in Blandford—where furniture and cabinet wares, of every description, faithfully made and elegantly finished, may be had on short notice." During this time he continued to live on the Taylor family property on lot 16 in "Old Blandford." Insurance records for 1805 documented the addition of a porch to the dwelling and noted that Taylor lived with Daniel P. and Mary Hanson.

Taylor continued his involvement in a wide variety of extracurricular activities. In 1806 he appraised the estate of Robert Miller, a Petersburg cabinetmaker (see MILLER, Robert). Three years later, he was elected a freeholder in the Common Hall of Petersburg, and he subsequently was selected to serve as alderman. Taylor was also appointed captain of one of the newly arranged "Patroles of 8" serving the Blandford Ward in 1809. His business remained profitable, and he apparently maintained his father's steady coffin production. In 1810, for example, he charged the estate of Frances Durfee "Sixteen dollars 10 1/2 Cents — for a Coffin."

The War of 1812 led to Taylor's participation in more activities outside his trade. When the Petersburg Republican Light Infantry formed that year to fight the British, "ALEX^a TAYLOR, *Captain*" advertised a "Battalion Muster" to take place on Saturday, 9 May on Centre Hill in Petersburg. (He later marched in a number of military parades.) During this period, Taylor was reelected to the Common Hall and again served as an alderman. Apparently, his infantry never went to battle, for as early as September 1813 he helped appraise the extensive estate of Petersburg cabinetmaker George Mason.

The tax lists for 1812 assessed Taylor for six adult white males and four adult black males, suggesting that he, like his father, ran a rather large cabinetmaking shop. Just one year later, only one black and two females were in the household, perhaps an indication of Taylor's increased attention to his military duties. In 1814 Taylor received \$50 for a "Mahogany Coffin, materials for ditto & hire of Hearse," an indication that he provided a range of funerary services beyond coffinmaking, not unusual for a southern cabinetmaker. In 1816 Taylor and cabinetmaker/coffinmaker Samuel White received the endorsement of the local coroner, and after Taylor's death, his estate inventory noted that he owned "1 Old Hearse and Harness" with White.

By 1815 Taylor was a relatively wealthy artisan. The extensive tax lists for that year assessed him for three white and four black males, as well as a "free black." Taylor owned a variety of mahogany case furniture, Windsor chairs, a Windsor or fancy settee, seventeen "pictures," and two looking glasses. During this time, he continued to be elected to the Common Hall, and in June 1816 he was involved with a group organizing a celebration of the upcoming 30th "Anniversary of American Independence." Taylor also retained command of a Petersburg infantry troop. In 1817 he was elected as one of the "commonwealth's justices of the peace" for Prince George County. All the while, he maintained his cabinetmaking business, concentrating on the undertaking portion of that trade. In 1817 he charged the estate of Paul Nash \$55 for a coffin and \$8.15 for "Services as Coroner holding Inquisition." In fact, Taylor had a considerable hold on Petersburg's funerary market. He was not only able to charge clients for coffinmaking and hearse service, but also for inquests and services as coroner, a lucrative appointment for someone with his business interests.

At the time of his death in 1820, Taylor was in the process of providing new furniture for Blandford Masonic Lodge No. 3, where he was a member and officer. This commission stemmed from the destruction of the lodge building by fire on 8 March 1819, a catastrophe that devastated much of Blandford. Lodge records reveal that, in

order to finance the refurnishing program, each member was charged a fee of \$5 to cover the cost of new jewels, working implements, and "furniture." Taylor received a Masonic funeral on 29 March 1820, and the lodge was draped in mourning for 60 days. Despite his earlier wealth and notable status within the community, Taylor may have been in financial trouble at the time of his death, perhaps as a result of the Panic of 1819. Within a year after his death, his widow appealed to the members of Lodge No. 3 for "charity" to care for her children, and she received \$30.

Although records most often mentioned Taylor's coffin production throughout his career, an extensive shop inventory taken after his death listed a wide range of furniture produced by his business, including upholstered forms (see Appendix E). Taylor's shop was one of the largest in the area. It included twelve workbenches, three complete tool chests, a lathe, a complete assortment of cabinetmaking equipment, and a "quantity of old furniture" that probably were in for repair. Also mentioned were a great number of finished and unfinished furniture forms, a "Wax Work Case," an "Old Harpsechord," a "Guittar case of Pine," an assortment of upholstery materials.

An announcement of the sale of "All the Personal Estate of Captain Alexander Taylor" was placed by White, administrator of Taylor's estate. Among the items offered was a book referred to as the "Gentleman and Cabinet makers Guide 1 Vol," later more accurately described as the "Gentleman and Cabinet-Makers Director, comprehending one hundred and sixty copper-plate engravings of the most elegant designs of household furniture, &c." a reference to Thomas Chippendale's *The Gentleman and Cabinetmaker's Director*, first published in London in 1754. Taylor had inherited the volume from his father, and, in fact, they were the only Petersburg cabinetmakers whose ownership of a design book was documented. Interestingly, White enthusiastically endorsed the volume even though, by 1820, it was almost seventy years old.

Administration of the estate was granted to White because Taylor's widow, Charlotte, and "Dan^l. Hauser" refused the task. As a result, White oversaw the public sale of the remainder of Taylor's property, and advertised for rent the Blandford "LOT and TENEMENT . . . having an excellent garden, a good well of water and other conveniences . . . well calculated for the reception of a family, with every necessary out house." He also assumed responsibility for the administration of William Stevenson's estate, which previously had been overseen by Taylor (Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1800-1804, 75, 216; Petersburg Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805, 369, pt. 2, 28; *Petersburg Intelligencer*, 6 July 1804; Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, 38, 89-91, 253a-254b; *Petersburg Republican*, 3 Sept. 1805, 10 June, 16 Aug. 1809, 7 May, 4 June 1812; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 64: 702; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1805-1808, 8 Apr. 1806, 1808-1812, 2 Jan. 1809, 6 Aug. 1810, 1 July 1811; Will Book No. 6, 1822-1827, Henrico County, 82; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1812-1816, 1 Apr., 4 June 1816; *Petersburg Republican*, 14, 18 June 1816, 28 Mar., 25 July 1817, 5, 30 May 1820; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1816-1819, 18 Apr. 1817, 15 Jan., 20 Aug., 16 Oct., 21 Nov. 1818, 17 June 1819, 1819-1823, 20 Apr., 16 Jun. 1820; Brown, *Blandford Lodge*, 87, 110; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1788-1820; Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1788-1820).

TULLOCK (TOLLOCH), Hugh. *Cabinetmaker, Carpenter?* (1786).

The only record of Tullock is an estate inventory taken after his death in 1786. The tools in his shop, as well as the listing of an unfinished chest of drawers, suggest that Tullock was involved in furniture-making (see Appendix F). The appointment of Alexander Taylor, a cabinetmaker, and Timothy Ezell, a carpenter, to appraise the property supports this hypothesis (see TAYLOR, Alexander. Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805).

VAUGHAN, Daniel. *Cabinetmaker* (1807-post 1820).

Daniel Vaughan differed from most of the other furniture-makers listed in this study in that his various shops were located outside of Petersburg's main commercial

districts. He first appeared in the city tax records in 1807, and in 1813 he purchased property from the estate of Timothy Ezell, a Petersburg carpenter. Vaughan purchased a variety of woodworking tools, as did David Vaughan, likely a relative. Interestingly, an upholsterer named John Vaughan, perhaps another relative, worked in Petersburg as well (see VAUGHAN, John, VAUGHAN, Littleton R.).

Among the items Daniel bought from Ezell's estate were "1 Lot plaines," 1 lot gages," and "1 parcel mahogany." Although little is known about Vaughan's activities in the area, the extensive 1815 tax records suggest that he attained a moderate degree of personal wealth, including ownership of a small number of mahogany furniture forms.

In 1818 the "house and lot formerly owned and occupied by Daniel Vaughan as a Cabinet Shop, lying on the corner of Harding and new Streets" was sold at auction. Within a year, Vaughan moved to the "South side of Oaks street or Halifax road" where he insured three buildings, including a "Cabinet Ware room" which fronted Oaks street, a "Cabinet maker shop," and an oddly proportioned building (60 by 19 feet) listed as a "wooden shed." The 1820 Census of Manufacturers in Virginia listed a "Daniel Vaughan" in Cumberland County, who used 2,000 feet of mahogany and walnut "plank" annually and employed "4 men and 1 boy" in a shop that was described as being in "good order," with an annual capital of \$2,500, wages amounting to \$1,000 and contingent expenses of \$150. It is quite likely that this was the same person. (In fact, written on the reverse of this particular document is "Letersburg," probably a misspelling of Petersburg.) Perhaps Vaughan ran a sawmill along the river in Cumberland County.

By 1819 Vaughan was assessed for three white and three black adult males, as well as a carriage worth the considerable sum of \$500, an indication that he was fairly affluent. When he died in 1825, he owned a diverse assortment of expensive household furnishings, at least seven slaves, two lots on the Fairfax Road near the "Oaks Warehouse" valued at \$800, two log houses at \$200 that may have been slave quarters, a variety of vehicles, and a dwelling house and land together valued at \$3,000. Among the items listed in his cabinet shop inventory were a variety of finished and unfinished case furniture forms, an assortment of upholstered seating and bed furniture, and the only known local reference to a "lathe & wheel" (see Appendix G, *Petersburg Intelligencer*, 31 May 1808; *Petersburg Republican*, 24 Feb. 1817, 1 Sept. 1818; Petersburg Hustings Wills No. 2, 1806-1827, 91-98, 217b-218b; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 56: 1307).

VAUGHAN, Littleton R. *Cabinetmaker's Apprentice* (1818).

In July 1818 Littleton R. Vaughan, orphan son of Enoch Vaughan, was apprenticed to Petersburg cabinetmaker Samuel H. Wills for a second time by Peter Vaughan, his legal guardian (see WILLS, Samuel H.). Apparently, when Littleton was first bound, Wills's indentures were "not according to the Act of Assembly." The second indenture stipulated that Littleton Vaughan was to remain with Wills until "he be of the age to wit" on 15 March 1820. No further references to him have been found (Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1816-1819, 17 July 1818).

VAUGHAN, John. *Upholsterer, Coachmaker* (1798-1817).

In 1787, when the first property tax records for the city of Petersburg were taken, nineteen separate Vaughans were listed, including a "John Vaughan." Not until 1798, however, did "JOHN VAUGHAN, COACHMAKER" first advertise; at that time he was offering for sale a "coachee" in Blandford. In 1805 he, along with cabinetmakers Alexander Taylor and Samuel White, appraised the estate of Petersburg cabinetmaker Robert Miller (see MILLER, Robert, TAYLOR, Alexander, and WHITE, Samuel). Shortly thereafter, Vaughan, a native of Richmond, leased a "one story dwelling house" on Bollingbrook Street belonging to John Bell, a Blandford resident. Little is known of his early trade activity.

In 1808 "John S. Vaughan" printed a public retraction concerning his mistaken accusation of William Branch of Caswell County, North Carolina, for stealing some

ribbon as well as another unspecified crime. Later that year, Vaughan advertised his services as an "upholsterer" at a shop on Bollingbrook Street "adjacent to Mrs. Geddy's brick tenement." His movement into the upholstery trade was a logical one, and it is possible that he originally had been trained in it. Most coachmakers were skilled in methods of upholstery and vice-versa because of the fashion of covering carriage seats and bonnets. Vaughan noted that he would "undertake to furnish SOFAS & CHAIRS of every description, Bed and Window CORNICES and CURTAINS." In one of the few instances of a Petersburg furniture-maker recognizing the town's female clientele, Vaughan promised both "ladies and gentlemen" that his work would be "neatly and expeditiously executed." He also offered to repair and re-stuff "All kinds of Sofas and Easy Chairs."

If Vaughan was still working in the same shop in July 1815, he may well have lost it in the massive fire that destroyed much of Bollingbrook Street. Between that time and his death in 1817, Vaughan placed no further advertisements. An obituary noted that he died as a result of lingering complications from a broken leg that occurred some fourteen years earlier. Apparently Vaughan had saved a number of individuals at the falls of the James River in Richmond when he "boldly plunged into the foaming surge, regardless of every danger, and after the second attempt, rescued seven of his fellow creatures from inevitable death" (Dinwiddie County Tax Books, 1787; *Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer*, 25 May 1798; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 64:713; *Petersburg Intelligencer*, 15 Apr. 1806, 31 May 1808; *Petersburg Republican*, 10 Sept. 1808.; *Petersburg Republican*, 21 Feb. 1817).

VENTUS (VINTUS, VENTRIS), John. *Cabinetmaker* (1813-post 1820).

In 1801 John "Vintus" was listed as a "free black" in the Norfolk Directory and as a "freeman" in the city tax records. It was also noted that he received a retail license. In his study of early Norfolk cabinetmaking, Ron Hurst surmised that this artisan was probably the same "John Ventris" who was apprenticed to Norfolk joiner William Boushell beginning in 1787. Unfortunately, little is known of Ventus's cabinetmaking career in Norfolk other than several of his shop locations.

In 1813 "John Ventriss" appeared as a free black in the Petersburg tax books, and by November 1815 he was in partnership with John Raymond, also a free black (see RAYMOND, John). Their shop was located on the north side of Old Street on the property of John Fisher. Five months later, the cabinetmaking firm of "Raymond & Ventus" had moved one lot to the east, onto a portion of lot 7 owned by Betsey Allegrue. Interestingly, the other part of lot 7 was occupied by cabinetmaker John DeJernatt (see DEJERNATT, John). Raymond had formerly shared a residence with Allegrue, a relatively wealthy free black who first appeared in the tax records in 1801, and annually renewed a license on the property, perhaps for a boarding house. Among the buildings Raymond and Ventus rented from her was a "Cabinet Makers shop & Ware room," further described as a 20-by-16-foot, two-story wooden building. Apparently this was a new structure because it did not resemble any of those insured on Allegrue's portion of lot 7 the year before.

"Raymond & Ventus" advertised their Old Street shop in August 1816 as being "A few doors (on the opposite side) above Major James William's and directly opposite the Old Petersburg Warehouse." In addition to thanking the public for its past patronage, the partners had ready "an assortment of work in the line, which they can recommend and dispose of on as accommodating terms, as any manufactory in the Borough," and they stated that they "execute and dispatch work, in the best and most fashionable style." Their shop may have been moderately sized, for the 1816 tax records assessed the partners for three adult white males and one adult black male who were probably apprentices or journeymen in their shop.

By 1820, Raymond and Ventus were appearing separately in the tax records, and no subsequent references to their business activities, as partners or alone, are known. When Betsey Allegrue died, sometime around 1830, her house was referred to as "Raymond's former mansion," perhaps an indication of a personal or financial relation-

ship between the two (Order Book, Norfolk County, 1787; Borough of Norfolk Personal Property, 1801; *Norfolk Directory*, 1801; *Norfolk Directory*, 1806; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 53: 511, 573, 69: 1682; *Petersburg Republican*, 13 Aug. 1816; Hurst, "Norfolk," 148-49; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1801-1820; Petersburg Land Tax Books, 1801-1820).

WHITE, Samuel. *Cabinetmaker, Coffinmaker* (1790-1829).

The earliest references to Samuel White occur in the account books of Sir Peyton Skipwith of Prestwoud in Mecklenburg County. Beginning in 1790, White provided Skipwith and his wife, Lady Jean, with a wide variety of furniture forms. Not surprisingly, the couple and, later, their children purchased furniture from several other Petersburg shops as well, including upholstered Windsor chairs from Joel Brown, a portable writing desk from the mercantile firm of "Ross & Douglas" in 1799, and a pair of looking glasses from "Peters & Tufts" in 1818. In fact, although they lived a considerable distance away from any major urban centers, the affluent Skipwiths were able to order goods from numerous southern cities, including Windsor seating furniture from David Ruth of Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1797, and a mahogany wardrobe from "Webster & Poore" of Richmond in 1810. It is also documented that they acquired furniture from Philadelphia and London.

White's output for the Skipwiths between 1790 and 1798 was considerable, and several bedsteads and perhaps a work table still at Prestwoud can be attributed to him, as can a bedstead at Colonial Williamsburg (acc.1978-30). In 1790 White provided a mahogany "Tent bedstead"; in 1791 a "Book-case with brackets" and a number of "Low chairs"; and in 1793 a "Small Medicine Chest. From June to November of 1797 he made a "Set 4 1/2 feet Dining Tables Maho'y., "two Washstands "t. Covers," "one Cabriole Chair" covered with sheeting, "three packing boxes for Tables," "two high post bedsteads" of birch, "French Sophy covered "t. Sheetting," "one Square Card Table "t. Drawer," "Wash Stand with Cover," "gothick book-case lined," "three boxes for do," "twelve Maho'y. Chairs," "tent bedstead—birch," and a "tent bedstead with Pavilion top." White's use of birch is the one of the few documented examples in Petersburg. The next year he provided a "high post bedstead mahogany, iron rod for ditto, Side board, Work Table, Packing box for Side board." His reference to the production of packing boxes is also unusual, although it must have been a fairly common practice for Petersburg artisans who shipped wares to much of central and southern Virginia, as well as northern North Carolina.

White's relationship with the Skipwiths was not without its problems. In 1796 he wrote Sir Peyton discounting statements made by Frank Eppes of Appomattox Manor at City Point and Henry Skipwith that his furniture was prone to falling apart. He adamantly stated that neither man owned any of his work, "except Mr. Eppes an Octagon Dining table." Such allegations, however, did not prevent White from receiving payments for all of the furniture he made for Peyton Skipwith, via several intermediaries in both Petersburg and Norfolk.

In 1792 White rented an unspecified lot in Petersburg from James Byrne. In addition to the Skipwith commission, White produced coffins for the city, his fee being paid from "the Levy for the Poor." In 1796 Edward Bowman, Thomas Bowman, and James Mass, all orphans, were bound to him as apprentices; three white males under the age of sixteen appeared in his tax records for that year. By 1796, White was also taxed for three adult white males and one adult black male, probably employees in his shop. During this time White became involved in a rather unusual project. The city government announced that a penalty would be assigned to anyone "taking dirt from the Courthouse hill, except under the inspection of Robert Armistead and Samuel White." In 1804 John Armistead, perhaps a relative, became another of White's apprentices.

In May 1796 White provided three coffins for the estate of Michael Burke at the substantial cost of £6:6:0, considerably more expensive than the coffins he produced for the poor. Shortly thereafter, the "curator" of the Burke orphans received "By Cash of Samuel White for the Frame of a House which stood in the Alley leading to Richmond

Graves, with liberty to remove the same to Sycamore Street on Land belonging to the orphans." Interestingly, in 1804 the Blandford cabinetmaking firm of "Taylor & Son" advertised for a runaway apprentice named Michael Burke, possibly one of the orphans mentioned in the account (see TAYLOR, Alexander).

During this period, White became involved in a variety of activities in Petersburg. For example, he served as an officer in the "Bollingbrook Fire Company beginning in 1798." He advertised a reward in 1805 for the return of a "BAY MARE," stolen from the pasture of Francis Fenn, "sen. of Prince-George county," and in that year helped appraise the estate of cabinetmaker Robert Miller, repeating the task in 1813 for the extensive estate of George Mason (see MILLER, Robert and MASON, George).

Beginning in 1807, White was listed as residing on a part of lot 34 on Bollingbrook Street. An 1813 insurance appraisal of this property included a wooden dwelling house, a separate kitchen to the rear, and a 24-foot square, one-and-a-half-story "Cabinet makers shop" made of wood. The house was insured for \$750 and the shop for \$500, buildings that were far less valuable than those belonging to successful Petersburg cabinetmakers at that time. The 1815 tax survey of household possessions listed a secretary, a sideboard, nine "bamboo or cane" chairs, and a bedstead. White also paid taxes for seven black slaves, including two women and five children under the age of twelve. When his estate was appraised at the time of his death in 1829, several "Negro" mothers and ten children represented \$2,280, or 63 percent, of the estate's total value.

In 1816 White was paid a total of £6 from the estate of "U. Wear" for "a Coffin &c." He also received the recommendation of the "Coroner for the town," a distinction shared with another coffinmaker, Alexander Taylor, Jr., of Blandford (see TAYLOR, Alexander, Jr.). By 1817 White apparently rented out a portion of his lot, although the occupants were not recorded. His "cabinet shop" probably remained in operation throughout this period. In July 1818 it was mentioned in a newspaper advertisement for another area business. Two years later, White was called upon to administer the estate of the aforementioned Captain Taylor. Among the items listed in Taylor's inventory is "1 Old Hearse and Harness" valued at \$5 that belonged to "Taylor and White."

White's will was written on 14 February 1829, and it was probated just five days later; he may have been ill when it was drafted. The document stated that after the sale of personal property to take care of all his "just debts," the remainder of his estate was to be divided between the children of his late brother John White, "formerly of Mecklenburg County, Va., and late of Tennessee." William Robertson, Jr., possibly a relative of the Petersburg cabinetmaker listed in this study, was named administrator of the estate, and cabinetmaker Samuel Caldwell assisted in the appraisal (see ROBERTSON, William and CALDWELL, Samuel). White's estate, valued at \$3,619.15, included several bottles of varnish, a "Dictionary Arts & Sciences," cabinetmaking tools valued at \$89.50, a grindstone, several inexpensive lots of pine and walnut "plank," five "Pine tables," and a lot of mahogany worth \$75. White apparently worked with upholstery, for "1 Sofa frame & Easy Chair" and "1 Lott Curled hair" valued at \$20 were also listed.

White's early orders from Sir Peyton Skipwith and surviving examples of his work at Prestwould clearly indicate that he was capable of producing a wide range of sophisticated forms. Unfortunately, little is known of his cabinetwork after this lucrative commission, other than coffin production, for he did not advertise. He may have turned to other business activities that reduced his production as a cabinetmaker after the end of the eighteenth century, a strong possibility in a town where the increased importation of wares after 1800 presented considerable competition for its furniture-makers (Sir Peyton Skipwith Papers, Account Records with Samuel White, 1 Sept. 1790, 13 Mar., 20 May 1791, 14 Dec. 1793, 25 May, 26 June, 22 July, 18 Sept., 3 Oct., 5 Oct., 30 Nov. 1797, 5 Feb., 29 May 1798; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1791-1797, 154, 178; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1797-1800, Oct. 1795, Jan. 1797; Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805, pt. 2, 11, 18, 21; *Virginia Gazette & Petersburg Intelligencer*, 4 Oct. 1796, 26 Jan. 1798; Petersburg

Hustings Court Minute Book, 1800-1804, 180; *Petersburg Republican*, 6 Oct. 1804, 4 Mar. 1817, 21 July 1818, 5, 20 May 1820; *Petersburg Republican*, 9 Aug. 1805; Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, 9, 89-91; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 52: 334; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1812-1816, 4 June 1816; Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 3, 1827-1829, 16b, 19b; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Lists, 1793-1820; Petersburg Land Tax Lists, 1792-1820).

WILLIAMS, Rubin. *Cabinetmaker* (1820).

The 1820 Census of Manufacturers of Virginia listed Rubin Williams in Dinwiddie County under the heading of "cabinetmaker." Nothing else is known of his career in Petersburg (1820 Census of Manufacturers, Virginia).

WILLS (WELLS), Samuel H. *Cabinetmaker* (1811-post 1820).

Wills appeared in the city tax lists in 1811 and 1812 but was not listed again until 1818. That year he apprenticed Littleton R. Vaughan, the orphan son of Enoch Vaughan, to learn the cabinet trade (see VAUGHAN, Littleton R.). This was the second time Vaughan's guardian, Peter Vaughan, had him apprenticed to Wills. The first contract apparently did not comply with the "Act of Assembly." By February 1819, Wills operated a shop in a three-story "Dwelling House" between Bank and Old streets that included a rear "counting room" occupied by T. R. Ryan. In March 1819 a lot on High Street occupied by "Mr. Samuel H. Wells" was offered for sale or rent. That year Wills was taxed for five adult white males, an adult black male, and a female, probably employees in his shop.

Wills offered his entire assortment of "CABINET FURNITURE" for auction in November 1819. Included were "Side-Boards, Bureaus, Bed-Steds; (Patent and Plain) Tea-Tables, Dining Tables, ditto with ends, Card Tables, first chop Sofas, Beds and Mattresses, Windsor Chairs, Easy Chairs, &c" (the unusual sofa reference remains a mystery). Many similar forms were again offered in January 1820, as well as "Secretaries; Book Cases; China Presses; 1 Secretary Desk," and an assortment of riding chair materials. That same month Wills paid tax of 56¢ to receive his license for keeping a "house of private Entertainment." Later notices for the sale or rent of his Bank Street shop provide further insight into the nature of Wills's activities. Located in the commercial part of town, it was described as "well calculated for a boarding house or will suit a gentleman with a private family" as well as a having a "spacious Lumber House." The building was also referred to as the "Cabinet Warehouse" lately occupied by Wills.

It is evident that Wills was as much a retail furniture merchant as a furniture-maker, a conclusion supported by his wide selection of Windsor and conventional furniture forms, upholstered items, and bedding materials. Apparently, he was one of many area furniture-makers to take advantage of Petersburg's numerous trade links to other cities, particularly to northern furniture manufacturing centers. It is not clear why he abandoned the furniture business to keep a boarding house. Like many early nineteenth-century Petersburg furniture-makers, he may have been unable to compete with or profit from the massive importation of manufactured wares (Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1816-1819, 17 July 1818; *Petersburg Republican*, 5 Feb., 16 Mar., 2 Nov. 1819, 4 Jan., 28 Apr., 4 July 1820; Petersburg Hustings Court Minute Book, 1819-1823, 20 Jan. 1820; Petersburg City Personal Property Tax Lists, 1811-1820).

WOODWARD, Sterling H. *Windsor Chair Shop Lessor, Coachmaker* (1798).

Although Sterling Woodward was not directly involved in the cabinetmaking trade in Petersburg, his leasing of space in his coachmaking shop to a Windsor chairmaker reflects a significant pattern of cooperation between artisans in the area. For example, another union of distinct trades occurred in Petersburg with the partnership of George Dillworth, a wire worker and wheat fan producer, and John Priest, a Windsor chairmaker (see DILLWORTH, George and PRIEST, John).

Although Woodward was listed in Petersburg's tax lists for 1798, he never again appeared in the city records. In fact, he spent most of his coachmaking career outside of town. By 1803 Woodward advertised through Petersburg newspapers that he made and repaired "Riding Chairs of every description" and "Carriages" in "Dinwiddie." An 1806 notice specified that Woodward's shop location was "on the main road leading direct from Petersburg to Nottoway courthouse," later identified as "Poplar Grove, in Dinwiddie, eighteen miles above Petersburg." (The last reference is confusing because this location is south, not north of the city.) Evidence suggests that Woodward became embroiled in a number of legal disputes during this period. In 1803, for example, he warned the public about people "verbally buying of things" in his name and publicly declared that he would not pay for any of these falsely contracted deals.

Despite these difficulties, Woodward apparently ran a successful coachmaking business. In 1806 he asked for two or three "active boys" to apprentice to the trade. In 1807 he placed a lengthy italicized notice in *The Republican* addressed "*To the Citizens Of the States of Virginia & N. Carolina*" that thanked the customers he had in both regions and noted the "great scarcity in the country" of objects from his profession. Woodward also announced that he employed a young man "*well acquainted with the Windsor Chair making business*" who "*has on hand a few dozen well finished Windsor Chairs, and is daily finishing Chairs of different kinds.*" No further references were made to this unknown chairmaker or to Woodward's involvement in the selling or making of furniture.

Woodward continued his coachmaking operation in Dinwiddie and sold many finished items through William Couch's shop on Old Street. In 1816 Woodward insured his "plantation" at Poplar Grove, a lot with a dwelling house, a large coachmaker's shop, and a detached kitchen. An 1819 advertisement, placed in Petersburg, Richmond, and Raleigh, North Carolina, newspapers, thanked his patrons "for 20 years back." In the notice Woodward referred to his business as a "manufactory" that employed all "Northern Workmen" who finished an elegant variety of carriages, gigs, riding chairs, and "Family Stages" (*Petersburg Republican*, 4 Jan., 9 Aug. 1803; *Petersburg Republican*, 14 Aug. 1806, 2 Apr. 1807; *Petersburg Intelligencer*, 25 Feb. 1814; *Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia*, 46: 513; *Intelligencer & Petersburg Commercial Advertiser*, 17 Dec. 1819; *Richmond Enquirer*, 21 Oct. 1820; Petersburg Personal Property Tax Books, 1798).

Appendix B

Appendix B - Excerpts from the inventory of John McCloud, a Norfolk trained cabinetmaker who worked in the Blandford section of Petersburg until his death in 1795. (Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805, 295, 29 January 1800):

Old Negro Woman Named Betty	£40 - 1 Stained	
China Press	£3 - 1 do do for Clothes	72/
small Mahogany Walnut Table	30/- 1 broken Black	
Walnut Candle Stand	12/- 1 Eight day	
Clock	£7.10.0	9.12.0
Large looking Glasses with Mahogany frames	40/	
ca - 1 (dressing) ditto	12/	4.12.0
Feather Bed Pillow Boulster & Old Blanket		
all 60/- 12 old black Walnut Chairs @ 12/		
	7.4.0	10.04.0
Mahogany Elbo chair	18 - 6 Silver Table spoons	
16 Silver teaspoons & a pr. of Sugar tongs		
weighing 20 1/4 oz 6/8		7.13.0
saucers 10 teacups 6 Coffee do & 4 decanters		
(some broke) 9/- 1 old Rim & Castors 3/		0.12.0
Dishes & 7 Plates 4/6 - 16 old & broken		
prints 6/- 1 Japaned Sugar Box with no		
lid 4 ^d - 1 Tea Kettle 4/6		0.15.4
Iron Pot 6/- 2 pair tongs & pair And Irons		
broke 2/6 - 2 old square pine tables 6/-		
1 liquor Case & Bottles		1.12.6
[Total]		£81.12.0

Appendix C

Appendix C- Excerpts from the estate inventory for George Mason, cabinetmaker, who married the daughter of local chairmaker Jonathan Russell and established a large cabinetmaking operation on their family property, lot 42 on Old Street. The first part of the inventory includes the contents of Mason's furniture "Ware Room," and the second part includes the contents of his cabinetmaking shop (Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, Petersburg, 89-91, 10 August 1813):

4	Bureaus @ \$25	100.00
1	Cylinder Desk and Book case	110.00
2	Sideboards @ \$120	240.00
1	Pr. Card tables	45.00
1	Cylinder desk and Book-case	120.00
1	Easy chair	25.00
1	Candlestand	8.00
12	Fancy Windsor Chairs	55.00
1	Fancy Settee	30.00
1	Plain Mahog bedstead	30.00
2	Mahog bed posts (carved)	10.00
1	circular wash stand	12.00
4	Fancy writing chairs @ \$10	40.00

947 feet of Inch St. Domingo Mahogy @ 38/100	359.86
67 feet of 1/2 inch St. Domingo Mahogy @ 20/100	13.40
563 feet of Inch Bay Mahogy @ 30/100	168.90
6 Bed posts	15.00
122 feet pine scantling	2.44
2 Setts Mahog. bed posts	24.00
One lott of Mahogany	36.00
1346 feet pine plank @ \$15 p. M	20.19
90 feet Gum scantling @ 3/100 p. foot	2.70
181 feet Walnut plank @ 6/100	10.86
130 feet 1/2 Inch poplar @ 2 Cents	2.60
1 frame saw	18.00
5 Setts Bed posts	60.00
One Piece of Mahogany	36.00
4 Sattin Wood Vaneers	4.00
27 fett Mahog Vaneers	6.75
2 Common Bedsteads	9.00
1 Turning lathe and Tools	30.00
136 feet of 2 I. pine	4.76
2 Vaneering Saws	12.00
Broken Crates of Glass	25.00
8 Work Benches @ \$5	40.00
15 long & 5 Jack planes	20.00
One Mahogy Wash stand	4.00
6 Smoothing planes, & 1 Tooth plane	8.00
33 hollows & rounds, moulding planes &c	22.00
One plow with 8 irons	6.00
16 Hand Screws	6.00
4 Pannel Saws	7.00
One Tenon Saw	2.00
two Sash Saws	3.00
One Hand Saw	1.25
One Dove Tail Saw	50
One Bow & one breaking Saw	2.00
One large Cramp	10.00
One Grind Stone	6.00
One small Vice (damaged)	50
two Hold fasts	3.00
two Glue Kettles	3.00
two Hatchets	2.00
2 Sad Irons	1.00
Stuff for a Sideboard	3.00
One unfinished Secretary	20.00
One ditto Bureau	8.00
two common bedsteads, 2 beds & 4 blankets	35.00
six pounds curled Hair	2.50
One broken easy chair frame	.75
Cuttings of Mahogany	100.00
One Negro Boy (Jacob)	300.00
One Negro Girl (Amey)	170.00

One Sorrel Horse	70.00
One Coachee & Harness	350.00
One Gigg & Harness	175.00
One Hearse	120.00
... household and kitchen furniture, 1000 shingles @ \$3, small library of books, 6 1/2 yards canvass follow, interrupted by Screws, mounting &c. with a case	
Bees Wax	2.50
One Cart & Harness	45.00
One Brace & 18 Bits	6.00

Appendix D

Appendix D - The estate inventory for Jonathan Russell, chairmaker, who lived on lot 42, Old Street. The inventory was taken in 1801, and among the appraisers of his estate was William Stainback, a local cabinetmaker from whom Russell purchased lot 42 in 1793. Because no specific references are known concerning Russell's occupation, **bold type** has been inserted to illuminate articles that possibly indicate his work as a chairmaker (Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book, No. 1, 1784-1805, 318):

We the Subscribers appointed Appraisers of the Estate of Jonathan Russell Dec^d agreeably to an Order of the Hustings Court of the town of Petersburg, at February Court last, have appraised the Estate as Follows -

Schooner Martha Ann	£700.0.0
a lighter or Skew	35.0.0
Lewis a Negro man	45.0.0
Kezie a woman	85.0.0
Beck a young woman	75.0.0
1 cow & Calf	8.0.0
1 ditto	6.0.0
1 Heifer	4.0.0
1 Bed Bedstead & furniture	11.0.0
1 Mahogany Bedstead	7.0.0
1 Bed & furniture	5.0.0
1 Maple Bedstead	3.0.0
1 Bed & furniture	12.0.0
1 ditto	5.0.0
1 Sideboard	1.10.0
1 Chest Drawers	6.0.0
1 Candlestand	0.18.0
1 Small Cupboard	0.18.0
1 Mahogany Desk & Bookcase	18.0.0
1 Pair dining Tables	10.0.0
1 Writing Desk with a small parcel Glue F Skin &c.	0.6.0
1 Clock	18.0.0
1 Desk & Drawers	4.0.0
1 Mahogany Table	1.16.0
1 Teatable	1.10.0
1 Pine Table	0.6.0
1 Oak Tea Table	0.10.0

1 riding chair with two bodys & Harness	30.0.0
1 Horse	36.0.0
1 Case & Cristal Bottles	2.2.0
1 Case wt. common bottles	0.6.0
1 pair Brass Fire Dogs & a pr. tongs	0.18.0
1 " Common Do. with Tongs &c.	0.6.0
1 Gun	3.12.0
1 Looking glass	0.12.0
1 ditto	1.0.0
2 Paint Stones	1.10.0
1 Jug Spirits Turpentine	0.12.0
17 Oil Jugs	1.5.6
2 1/2 Barrells Whiting 30/	3.15.0
Amount Brought Forwd.	£1146.12.6
2 Large Canisters	0.12.0
13 Windsor chairs 5/	3.5.0
1 Mahogany Tea Tray	1.10.0
1 " " Knife Box 5 knives & 5 forks	0.12.0
1/2 doz Silver teaspoons & pr. Sugar tongs	2.2.0
3 silver Tablespoons & 1 tureen ladle	3.12.0
1 Coffee Mill	0.3.0
1 Pewter Basin & Dish 2 Tinpans	0.10.0
7 Q ^w [Queensware] China Plates 2 dishes & 1 Pudding Dish	0.12.0
1 Pr Qt. Decanters 1/2 doz wine Glasses 1 pr Salts & 1 Tumbler	0.15.0
1 Rim & Castors	0.4.6
1 pr. Brass Candlesticks	0.15.0
1 Hand Bellows	0.6.0
1 Saddle & Bridle	2.8.0
1 Chest Tools including 3 Saws	6.0.0
1 pr. Steelyards	0.5.0
2 pr. Scales	0.9.0
1 Sett Turning Laithes	3.0.0
3 Work Benches	1.4.0
1 Grind Stone	0.12.0
1 Spinning Wheel & Cards	0/12.0
1 pr. Sad Irons	0.3.0
1 Pan 3 Potts 2 Dutch Ovens 1 Tea Kettle 1 Brass Skillet & 1 Iron Kettle	3.12.0
3 Tubs & 1 pine table	0.12.0
1 Stove Iron	3.12.0
a parcel of Chair makers material & some unfinished chairs	3.0.0
16 Poplar planks	1.16.0
1 Sett Candle Moulds	0.6.0
	£1189.8.0

Allin Stokes
Dav Anderson
William Stainback

Appendix E

Appendix E- Excerpts from the estate inventory for Alexander Taylor, Jr, cabinetmaker and coffinmaker, who worked in the Blandford section of Petersburg until his death in 1820 (Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, 253a-254b, 29 April 1820).

Two lists were included in the inventory, one citing a number of items sold by the administrator of the estate, cabinetmaker Samuel White, before they could be appraised. This list included the following book:

Gentleman and Cabinetmakers Guide 1 Vol \$6.00

(As noted by Samuel White, administrator of Taylors estate, this volume refers to Thomas Chippendale's *Gentleman and Cabinetmaker's Director* first published in London in 1754. It is probably the same "Cabinet makers Guide" listed in the estate of Taylor's father, valued at \$4.00).

The other list taken by the appraisers included 32 more books by title, another "40 old volumes various authors," a gun with shot bag and powder horn, a grid iron and trivet, three jugs, one demijohn, and a pine dining table. The contents of Taylor's cabinet shop are noted as:

1	Sideboard with Secretary drawer	\$40.00
1	do do with Collmns	40.00
1	do do with Eliptic front not finished	10.00
1	do do with Straight front and a Candle stand	10.00
1	Bedstead of Mahogany	20.00
1	do of do	20.00
1	do of do	20.00
1	do of do	20.00
1	Settee of do	2.00(?)
1	Tea Table of do	10.00
1	Work Stand of do unfinished	10.00
1	Circular Table with a drawer of do	6.00
1	Wax Work Case of do	2.00
1	Old Harpsechord	1.00
1	Dining Room Fan with staft(?) and semicircle	.25
1	do do do with do and do	.25
1	Guittar Case fo Pine	1.00
12	Cherry Chairs	4.00
4	Easy Chair frames \$1	4.00
12	Mahogany and Walnut bed posts new and old	3.00
	a parcel of curled hair	1.00
	a parcel of cord	1.00
	a parcel of Mahogny in Garret and cutting of do in do	30.00
2	Music Stands of Mahogny	.60
2	Pine boxes begun for book Case	.60
1	Shet (?) of a Bureau and one Waiter	.24
	Mahogny plank and Stubs in Cellar	16.00

	do	Scatlin	in	do	6.00
	do	Vin(eer)	in	do	4.00
	do	Cuttings	in	do	6.00
	Cherry and Wanut plank		in	do	6.00
	Birch	do	in	do	3.00
	Birch and Gum Scatlin		in	do	8.00
	Pine Plank		in	do	3.00
12	Work Benches				10.00
25	Hand Screws				15.00
1	Turning Lathe and Tools say 30 Chissels and Gouges				5.00
3	frame saw plates				.50
1	Wood Saw				.75
1	Vaneuring Saw				5.00
	Gum and Poplar plank				8.00
1	Secretary and Book Case				50.00
1	Book Case				15.00
1	China Press				40.00
1	Pine Press with drawers (old)				10.00
1	Gigg and Harness				5.00
1	Old Hearse and Harness (Taylor and White)				5.00
1	plain Pine Press				7.00
3	Iron Cramps and on[e] bench Vice				10.00
1	Pit Saw				2.00
8	hand, frame and Tenon Saws				4.00
24	Carving Gouges				2.00
	a parcel of Prints and Frames				.25
3	Tool Chests and Tools				30.00
1	Stove and Pipe				2.00
2	Bow Saws				3.00
	One pound of lamp black				.10
1	Empty Liquor Case				.24
3	Pair of Table Planes				4.50
	Locks, Screws, Rings, Tacks, Coffin Mounting &c				5.00
1	Grind Stone				.24

Appendix F

Appendix F - Excerpts from the estate inventory for Hugh Tollock, December 18, 1786, a carpenter/cabinetmaker in Petersburg (Petersburg Hustings Court Will Book No. 1, 1784-1805, 75). The appraisal was made by Andrew Hamilton and cabinetmakers Alexander Taylor and Richard Powell.

Tollock had personal property including household and kitchen furniture, clothing (itemized), a silver watch, and other wares, with a total value of £107/5. Included in this were the apparent contents of his shop:

16 Gimblets 2/6 - 9 files 2/- 8 Chisels 3/6 - 4 Plane Irons 2/4 -	
1 Saw Sett 6d	9/10
4 Gouges 1/6 - 1 Rabbit plane Iron 4d - 7 Augers 6/- 5 Chisels & one gouge 2/3	10/1
2 Planes 5/- Rasp & File 9d - 4 Gimblets 9d - 2 Broading Awls 2	6/8
2 Sliding Rules 3/- 2 Hammers 9d - 1 Square 6d - 2 Planes 1/9 - 2 Adzes	3/9/0
1 Chest Drawers unfinish 30/- 1 Grind Stone 2/6 - 1 pair Compasses 6d	[14/9]
1 Bench Screw 5/- . . .	[5/0]
1 work Bench 6/	[6/0]
...2 Carpenters squares 1/- 1 Plane 1/6	[2/6]
1 Mallet & Gouge 63 - 1 Hoe 2/- 600 feet plank 36/	1.18.6
1 Silver Watch 80/- 1 Table Frame 3/	4.3.0
1 Lot of Plank 4/6 - 1 do half dresd. - 250 feet 15/	19.6

Appendix G

Appendix G - Excerpts from the estate inventory for Petersburg cabinetmaker Daniel Vaughan (Hustings Court Will Book No. 2, 1806-1827, Petersburg, September 19, 1825, pp. 217b-218b). After the listing of his household inventory there is a "list of furniture &c &c at Shop near Oaks Warehouse":

1	Bureau Mahogany	18.00
1	Side Board with Columns mahogany	45.00
1	do do plain do	30.00
1	pair Tea Tables	15.00
1	Large dining Table	12.00
1	Easy Chair	8.00
1	Bottom part of China Press	10.00
1	Curtain Bed Stead Mahogany	20.00
1	do do do	15.00
1	do do do	15.00
1	Curtain do Maple	24.00
1	top part China Press (unfinished)	8.00
3	Low post Bedsteads	7.50
1	Curtain Bedstead poplar (unfinished)	3.00
1	do do secondhand	10.00
1	Pine frame	.25
1	Bottom part of China Press unfinished	2.00
1	B_____ [illegible] (unfinished) [bureau]	3.00
1	Veneering Saw	5.00

1	Cramp	5.00
1	Chest of Tools	75.00
5	Work Benches	12.00
1	Curtain Bedstead Poplar	3.00
1	Grindstone	4.00
1	Lot of Plank	10.00
1	Lot of Mahogany in small bitts	.50
1	Pine Bedstead	.50
1	Cupboard	1.00
1	Stove and pipe	10.00
13	Hand Saws	6.00
1	Lot of plank and Pailing	5.00
1	Lathe & wheel	50.00

FOOTNOTES

1. The term Tidewater is used to describe mainland eastern Virginia, specifically, from Norfolk to Fredericksburg and including fall-line towns like Richmond and Petersburg, which arguably could be called Piedmont centers. The "neat and plain" approach is documented in a number of eighteenth-century British design books, notably plates 55, 79, 120, and 129 in Thomas Chippendale's *Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director* (London, 1763, 3rd edition), plates 52 and 85 in George Hepplewhite's *The Cabinetmaker and Upholsterer's Guide* (London, 1794, 3rd edition). It can be compared with more ornate rococo designs found in plates 21, 22, 122, and 137 in Chippendale's volume.
2. Jonathan Prown, "A Cultural Analysis of Furniture Making in Petersburg, Virginia, 1760-1820," Master's thesis, College of William and Mary, 1992.
3. Richard L. Jones, *Dinwiddie County, Carrefour of the Commonwealth* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1976), 6.
4. Although Petersburg was not officially incorporated until 1748, I will forthwith refer to the site at the falls of the Appomattox as Petersburg, as it was commonly referred to after the 1720s. See Prown, "Petersburg," 8-13.
5. J. A. LeMay, ed., *Robert Bolling Woos Ann Miller: Love and Courtship in Colonial Virginia, 1760* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), pl. 1; James G. Scott and Edward Wyatt IV, *Petersburg's Story* (Petersburg: Titmus Optical Co., 1960), 17.
6. Carlville Earle and Ronald Hoffman, "Staple Crops and Urban Development in the Eighteenth Century South," from *Perspectives in American History*, Bernard Bailyn and Donald Fleming, eds., 10 (1976): 58.
7. Scott and Wyatt, *Story*, 19-20.
8. A. J. Morrison, "Letters of Roger Atkinson," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 15 (1908): 347, 1770.
9. Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, *Travels Through the United States of North America* (London, 1799).
10. By the eve of the Revolution, Scottish interests controlled nearly one-half of Virginia's tobacco trade and nearly two-thirds of the Upper James District, which encompassed Petersburg. For example, the firm of William Cunningham and Company controlled fourteen stores in Virginia by the 1770s, most of which were located in the fertile piedmont region and at the fall-line sites, including Petersburg. Each of these stores was run by Scottish emigrants, who frequently sent to Great Britain for capable "assistants." Noting the success of these mercantile operations, one early observer commented that "the men who achieved great wealth were merchants as well as planters. They bought up the crops of their neighbors and imported the manufactures their neighbors purchased." Scott and Wyatt, *Story*, 22; Richard R. Beeman, *The Evolution of the Southern Backcountry: A Case Study of Lunenburg County, Virginia, 1746-1832* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), 79; T. M. Devine, *The Tobacco Lords. A Study of the Tobacco*

Merchants of Glasgow and their Trading Activities c. 1740-90 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975), 82-85; Lois Green Carr, "Diversification in the Colonial Chesapeake: Somerset County, Maryland, in Comparative Perspective," in *Colonial Chesapeake Society*, ed. Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 351.

11. As historian Thomas J. Wertenbaker explained, "Norfolk's northern trade was greatly stimulated by the rise of the Fall line towns, for the merchants of these places rarely dealt directly with Europe or the West Indies. The more produce which came down the upper James to Richmond or down the Appomattox to Petersburg, the greater would be the amount to be shipped from Norfolk's wharves." Earle and Hoffman, "Staple Crops," 58; La Rochefoucault, *Travels*, 258; Thomas J. Wertenbaker, *Norfolk: Historic Southern Port*, 2nd. edition (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1931), 83.
12. Scott and Wyatt, *Story*, 27.
13. Johann David Schoepf, *Travels in the Confederation* (1783-1784) (New York: Burt Franklin), 72.
14. Thomas Anburey, *Travels through the Confederation* (New York: New York Times and Arno Press, 1969), 354.
15. Messrs. Hay, Stevenson, and Co. Account, 2 March 1784, Buchanan, Hamilton and Co. Invoice Book, 1784, Public Records Office, London, C114/117, pt. 3, no. 7. Thanks to Nancy Hagedorn of Colonial Williamsburg for this information.
16. Buchanan's later correspondence to Scottish merchant Duncan Hunter warned British merchants to be aware of American regional preferences for certain wares. For example, a shipment of nails originally intended for New York in the 1780s was re-routed to Petersburg, since, as Buchanan explained, they were "all flats & of course unsalable at New York." He went on to write that he thought sales in general would be profitable in Petersburg: "Goods in this state continue to be scarce & unless the importations made in course of the summer are very great. . . there is no doubt of good sales. . . it is really not my opinion that there will be any overstock." Williamsburg *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 10 June 1773; David Buchanan Account, 22 February 1785, Buchanan, Hamilton and Co., Sales book, 1784, Public Records Office, Chancery Lane (London), C114/117, pt. 3, no. 6. Thanks to Nancy Hagedorn for this information.
17. See also MESDA accession 2024-9, MRF S-14,216, and an unnumbered chair found in Mecklenburg County and recorded by a MESDA field researcher.
18. A similar table, signed "Will.m Moseley . . . His Tabel . . . Sep, 4, 1773" was cited in Helen Comstock, "Furniture of Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and Kentucky," in *Southern Furniture* (New York: Magazine Antiques, 1952), 58, fig. 140. A William Moseley, bricklayer, was recorded in Princess Anne County on 15 January 1773. He died shortly before 9 September of that year, the date his will was probated, and his inventory was taken on 24 September (Princess Anne County, Deed Book 13, 125, 206; Deed Bk. 14, 104).

19. The author has examined several generically-related tables that descended in Petersburg or Petersburg-area families. MESDA recorded a six-legged table (MRF S-7178), with an early twentieth-century Petersburg history, that is similar to this one, although apparently not from the same shop.
20. Wallace B. Gusler, *Furniture of Williamsburg and Eastern Virginia, 1710-1820* (Richmond: Virginia Museum, 1979); Ronald L. Hurst, "Cabinetmakers and Related Tradesmen in Norfolk, Virginia, 1770-1820," Master's thesis, College of William and Mary, 1989.
21. Hurst, "Norfolk," 15; Gusler, *Williamsburg*, 4-5; Wertenbaker, *Southern Port*, 75, 83.
22. My attribution to Petersburg of these two tables is at odds with Wallace Gusler, who attributed both to Williamsburg. See Wallace B. Gusler, "The Tea Tables of Eastern Virginia," in *Antiques* 135, no. 5 (May 1989): 1243-45 and fn. 18. While it is clear that a number of ornately carved tables and stands with guttae feet were made in Williamsburg, two other Pembroke forms he cited—plate 9 and fig. 5—are structurally and aesthetically unrelated to either the carved versions or the neat and plain forms.
23. Gusler, *Williamsburg*, 139-41, fig. 94; "Tea Tables," 1244-46, figs. 5 and 5a.
24. Between 1778 and 1788 Tucker lived at Matoax, just across the Appomattox from Petersburg, with his wife Frances Bland Randolph, a native of Prince George County and the wealthy widow of John Randolph, also of Matoax. Historical evidence clearly indicates that between 1771 and 1777 Tucker led a decidedly transient lifestyle, first as a law student at the College of William and Mary, and then as a law clerk working in the Petersburg area. Between 1775 and 1777, a financially destitute Tucker was called home to his native Bermuda by his father. For a more complete description of Tucker's ties to Williamsburg, see Prown, "Petersburg," 35.
25. Gusler, *Williamsburg*, 147, n. 1.
26. John Bivins, *The Furniture of Coastal North Carolina, 1700-1820* (Winston-Salem, N. C.: Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, 1988), 400-407 (hereafter cited as Bivins, FCNC).
27. Virginia artisans also may have utilized architectural treatises whose use can be documented in Virginia, for example William Salmon, *Palladio Londonensis; or the London Art of Building* (London: Printed for S. Birt, C. Hitch, L. Hawes, E. Wicksteed, W. Johnston, T. Longman, and E. Dilly, 1755) or James Gibbs, *Book of Architecture, containing Designs of Buildings and Ornament* (London, 1728).
28. Gusler convincingly argues that this book was an integral part of the Anthony Hay shop prior to Dickenson's tenure as Master Cabinetmaker that began in 1771. As evidence, he notes the striking similarity of the lower half of the Masonic Master's Chair made by Benjamin Bucktrout, Dickenson's predecessor, to plate 21 in Chippendale's *Gentleman's and Cabinet-Makers Director* of 1762 (third edition). Gusler, *Williamsburg*, 75-79; *Petersburg Republican*, 5 May 1820.
29. *Williamsburg Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), 13 June 1766.

30. *The Vestry Book and Register of Bristol Parish, Virginia, 1720-1789*, 202, 213; *Williamsburg Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), 17 June 1775.
31. *Williamsburg Va. Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), 3 Dec. 1772.
32. *Williamsburg Va. Gazette* (Purdie), 26 July 1776.
33. *Journal of the Council of the State of Virginia*, 12 July 1776-2 Oct. 1777, 1: 148; Hurst, "Norfolk," 134.
34. Norfolk traditions later arrived in the Petersburg area via John McCormick, a British native who had previously worked in Baltimore, Alexandria, and Norfolk. McCormick spent the final years of his career in Blandford. John Ventus, a free black, apprenticed in Norfolk with a joiner, William Boushell, beginning in 1787. By 1813 he was in Petersburg and within a few years was involved in a successful cabinetmaking partnership with John Raymond, another free black.
35. Gusler, *Williamsburg*, 6.
36. Gusler, *Williamsburg*, 155-77; Luke Beckerdite, "A Virginia Cabinetmaker: The Eventon Shop and Related Work," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts (JESDA)* 10, no. 2 (Nov. 1984): 1-33; Luke Beckerdite, "Style and Technology Shifts in One Virginia Shop," *JESDA* 9, no. 2 (Nov. 1983): 21-42. The numerous early urban and rural shops identified in Bivins, FCNC, further suggest the widespread movement of British furniture-making traditions in the coastal South.
37. Schoepf, *Travels*, 81.
38. Mary Holdane Coleman, *St. George Tucker: A Citizen of No Mean City* (Richmond, Va.: Dietz Press, 1938), 102.
39. Gusler, *Williamsburg*, 114-20. See note 41 for a discussion of the foot construction of the Jones desk.
40. In fact, numerous desks with either interior arrangement have been found. Bivins cited a Norfolk example, fig. 6.3, and North Carolina interpretations (figs. 6.29, 6.32, 6.83, and 6.86, to name a few). Thanks to Ronald Hurst for pointing out the common southern use of these British designs.
41. This chest was attributed to Williamsburg by Gusler, *Williamsburg*, 131, as was one at Colonial Williamsburg (acc. 1938-144), which in fact is not from this group and appears to represent a more vernacular form. Gusler indicated that this chest and the Peter Jones desk (see fig. 17) have triangular blocks spanning the brackets of each foot. Actually, they do not have such blocks, but rather have common shaped and mitered flankers like those on most of the Petersburg examples with vertically-laminated feet. Figure 88 in Gusler, *Williamsburg*, has no known history and is missing its foot blocking, although it may have had composite feet like the walnut clothespress (CWF acc. 1991-107). Other directly related Petersburg examples have been recorded by MESDA (MRF S-6525, S-14,592, S-7620, and possibly S-5841).
42. A similarly-styled corner cupboard, with no history, is illustrated in William McPherson Horner, Jr., *Horner's Blue Book of Philadelphia Furniture* 1935 (reprint, Alexandria, Va.: Highland House Publishers, 1988), pl. 203. Another corner cupboard and a desk-and-bookcase from

the same shop were found in piedmont North Carolina in the mid-twentieth century. These forms may also represent a Petersburg tradition. Thanks to Sumpter Priddy III of Richmond for his assistance in identifying this fretwork group.

43. Thanks to Sumpter Priddy for drawing the correlation of these architectural elements to those of the desk to my attention.
44. Two of these chairs are at Wilton, a historic house in Richmond, Virginia. Three others remain at Appomattox Manor, now a National Park Service historic site, which is located in present-day Hopewell.
45. Shoe refers to the element into which the lower part of the splat or back support is set. On some chairs the shoe is integral with the rear rail, and on others it is a separate piece.
46. A side chair (MRF S-6163) from the same shop, and lacking a rear stretcher, was collected in Petersburg in the twentieth century.
47. Perhaps related to this latter form is a side chair (MRF S-5128) with a possible Norfolk history.
48. Chairs in this group were originally attributed to Williamsburg on the assumed relationship of their dovetailed crest rail and arm construction to an undovetailed technique evident on some Peter Scott-attributed corner chairs. The two approaches, however, are both structurally and stylistically quite different. In fact, it has been suggested that the chair in fig. 41 has a crest rail construction like that on the Scott chairs which it does not. Gusler, *Williamsburg*, 36-38, figs. 28 and 29.
49. Bivins, *FCNC*, 342, fig. 6.114.
50. The Flowerdew Hundred corner chair (fig. 41) and its related examples and the Tucker corner chair (fig. 43) were attributed to a single Williamsburg group. However, their structural and stylistic ties are of a general nature only. See n. 48 and Gusler, *Williamsburg*, 36-39 and 141-42.
51. Scott and Wyatt, *Story*, 29.
52. Anburey, *Confederation*, 357.
53. Wertenbaker, *Southern Port*, 75-78, 91.
54. William Siener, "Economic Development in Revolutionary Virginia: Fredericksburg, 1750-1810," Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 1982, 33.
55. Suzanne Lebsock, *The Free Women of Petersburg* (New York: W. Norton and Co., 1984), 7, 91.
56. *Edenton State Gazette of North Carolina*, 27 Aug. 1795.
57. Scott and Wyatt, *Story*, 41.
58. Schoepf, *Travels*, 72.
59. The large number of colonial furniture forms attributable to Petersburg suggests that there may well have been more than just three shops.
60. Despite its 1784 incorporation as part of Petersburg, Blandford continued to be distinguished by that name. Norfolk County Order Book, 1773, 19 Mar. 1773, 163a.
61. *Virginia Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer*, 23 June 1791.
62. Bivins, *FCNC*, 493.

63. Thomas Jones to James Spiers, letter, Dec. 1753, Jones Family Papers (original), Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. Thanks to Cathy Hellier of Colonial Williamsburg for this reference.
64. Jack Ayres, ed., *Paupers and Pig Killers - the Diary of William Holland, a Somerset Parson, 1799-1818* (Penguin Country Library), 32. Thanks to Betty Leviner of Colonial Williamsburg for this reference.
65. *Petersburg Republican*, 9 Apr. 1810.
66. At the time, Old Street, also referred to as Water Street, was situated along what is now known as Grove Avenue.
67. Hurst, "Norfolk," 65.
68. Mark R. Wenger's research on Virginia architecture suggests that a direct correlation can be cited between the development of houses with central passages and the popularity of Windsor chairs, at times referred to in inventories as "passage chairs," which not only were used in these spaces but continued to be placed in outdoor settings. Mark R. Wenger, "The Central Passage in Virginia: Evolution of an Eighteenth Century Living Space," in Camille Wells, ed., *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture 2* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1986), 137-49; LeMay, Bolling, 67.
69. Wendy Wick, "Stephen Girard: A Patron of the Philadelphia Furniture Trade," Master's thesis, University of Delaware, 1977, 228. Thanks to Sumpter Priddy III for this reference.
70. *Va. Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer*, 6 Sept. 1793.
71. McKeen's Windsor making operation in Petersburg was established at the same time as the Richmond shop of Robert and Andrew McKim. Indeed, Richmond also served as an important Windsor chairmaking center, which suggests that it, along with Petersburg, may well have dominated the Windsor market for much of southern and central Virginia. See Giles Cromwell, "Andrew and Robert McKim: Windsor Chair Makers," *JESDA* 6, no. 1 (May 1980), 1-20. Despite their similar spelling it seems that McKeen and McKim were separate and apparently unrelated family names. Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia 10: 16.
72. Records and illustrations reveal that during the colonial period, coaches and riding chairs were distinct forms. Curiously, post-Revolutionary references by southern artisans blur these distinctions by using the terms "coachmaker" and "chairmaker" interchangeably, and I am using them in the same spirit.
73. These figures are based on the Prince George area artisan records compiled by MESDA.
74. A form similar to the Mount Vernon example appears in a painting entitled *View of the Town of Warrenton* and illustrated in Bivins, FCNC, 66. *Petersburg American Star*, 7 Aug. 1817.
75. *Petersburg Va. Gazette*, 3 Nov. 1795; *Va. Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer*, 21 Oct. 1796.
76. Other Virginia artisans, such as Norfolk cabinetmaker Chester Sully in the first decades of the nineteenth century, ran similar branch furniture-making ventures, a term I am using to describe the practice. See Hurst, "Norfolk," 138-45; *Petersburg Property Tax Books*, 1797.

77. *Va. Gazette and Petersburg Intelligencer*, 29 Sept. 1791, 7 May 1799.
78. Detailed analyses of their specific furniture-making traditions are much needed to see if their furniture-making traditions were like those of Petersburg. Aline H. Zeno's "The Furniture Craftsmen of Richmond, Virginia, 1780-1820" (Master's thesis, University of Delaware, 1987) represents an economic history of the trade that considers how artisans fit into Richmond's larger business community. Specific material culture themes, such as what the furniture looked like and why it looked the way it did, are not explored to any great extent.
79. Hurst, "Norfolk," 48.
80. Jones, *Dinnwiddie*, 11-15.
81. Hurst, "Norfolk," 32-35.
82. *Petersburg Republican*, 14 Nov. 1811.
83. Scott and Wyatt, *Story*, 43, 61, 159.
84. Lebsack, *Free Women*, 8.
85. Siener, "Economic Development," 400.
86. John Cook Wyllie, ed., "Observations Made During a Short Residence in Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 76: 4 (1968), 392-93. Thanks to Betty Leviner for this reference.
87. Cincinnati Liberty Hall, 7 Aug. 1815.
88. Lebsack, *Free Women*, 8.
89. *Norfolk American Beacon and Commercial Diary*, 6 Aug. 1816; Lebsack, *Free Women*, 8.
90. Wyllie, "Observations," 414.
91. "Screw machine" describes an early nineteenth-century apparatus that die-cut the threads into screws. *Hustings Court Minute Book, 1800-1804*, 75.
92. *Petersburg Republican*, 6 Mar. 1818.
93. Bivins, *FCNC*, 88-89.
94. Other early cut-nail manufacturers in Petersburg included William Knox (1809), Robert Haffey (1810), John Osborne (1810), and William Willis (1812). Thanks to William Graham for this information. *Petersburg Republican*, 2 May 1815.
95. *Petersburg Republican*, 24 Oct. 1811, 12 Mar. 1812.
96. *Petersburg Republican*, 7 Feb. 1817.
97. *Petersburg Intelligencer*, 31 May 1808.
98. *Baltimore Evening Post*, 31 May 1808; *Petersburg Mercantile Advertiser*, 17 Feb. 1817.
99. Furniture historians have long recognized the similarity of the two trades; the spindled seat and legs of the Windsor chair are technologically and aesthetically akin to the spoked hub of a wheel. *Petersburg Republican*, 29 Apr. 1809.
100. *Petersburg Intelligencer*, 21 Sept. 1804, 25 Sept. 1807; *Republican*, 9 June 1806.
101. *Petersburg Intelligencer*, 26 Mar. 1811.

102. *Raleigh Register*, 15 Jan. 1819.
103. Cromwell, "Andrew and Robert McKim," 8; *Petersburg Republican*, 2 May 1814.
104. J. D. Townes, the estate auctioneer who sold DeJernatt's entire estate in 1819, was responsible for this description. *Petersburg Republican*, 15 June 1819.
105. *Petersburg Republican*, 17 Nov. 1806.
106. *Petersburg Republican*, 3 Oct. 1815.
107. Gusler, *Williamsburg*, 5.
108. This observation was brought to my attention by William Graham.
109. *Petersburg Republican*, 13 Aug. 1816.
110. Order Book No. 4, Greensville County, 345.
111. Fredericksburg *Virginia Herald*, 30 Nov. 1802; Hurst, "Norfolk," 70-72. It is interesting to note an advertisement in the Annapolis *Maryland Gazette*, 21 Sept. 1748: "Ran away from. . . Northumberland county . . . Jeremiah Wells, born in Sussex [England] . . . brought up a farmer, and flags Chairs very well." No relationship between him and Mrs. Wells has been established.
112. Lebsack, *Free Women*, 154.
113. Although John Bivins's study of furniture made in coastal North Carolina essentially ends with the year 1820, his appendix of cabinetmakers indicates that there were a number of furniture-makers at work in North Carolina beyond that year. A study of them, as well as surviving North Carolina furniture made after 1820, may result in some styles that can be traced back to Petersburg.
114. Forsyth M. Alexander, "Cabinet Warehousing in the Southern Atlantic Ports, 1783-1820," *JESDA* 15, no. 2 (Nov. 1989): 3.
115. *Petersburg Republican*, 22 Nov. 1816.
116. *Petersburg Intelligencer*, 29 Dec. 1807; *Wilmington Gazette*, 25 Nov. 1806. Leiper appeared in Philadelphia's 1798 trade directory.
117. *Petersburg Intelligencer*, 22 Sept. 1815, 16 Sept. 1816.
118. Gusler, *Williamsburg*, 87-89.
119. A more detailed analysis of my reattribution can be found in the object's file folder at the department of collections in Colonial Williamsburg.
120. *Intelligencer and Petersburg Commercial Advertiser*, 17 Dec. 1819.
121. Thanks to William Graham for these insights.
122. Alexander, "Warehousing," 35.
123. *Petersburg Republican*, 12 Jan. 1813.
124. *Petersburg American Star*, 18 Oct. 1817.
125. Zeno, "Richmond," 14.
126. *Intelligencer and Petersburg Comm. Advertiser*, 24 Nov. 1825.
127. W. Eugene Ferslew, comp., *The Second Annual Directory for the City of Petersburg, to Which is Added a Business Directory for 1860* (Petersburg, Va.: George E. Ford, 1860).

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